

A LEVEL

Candidate Style Answers

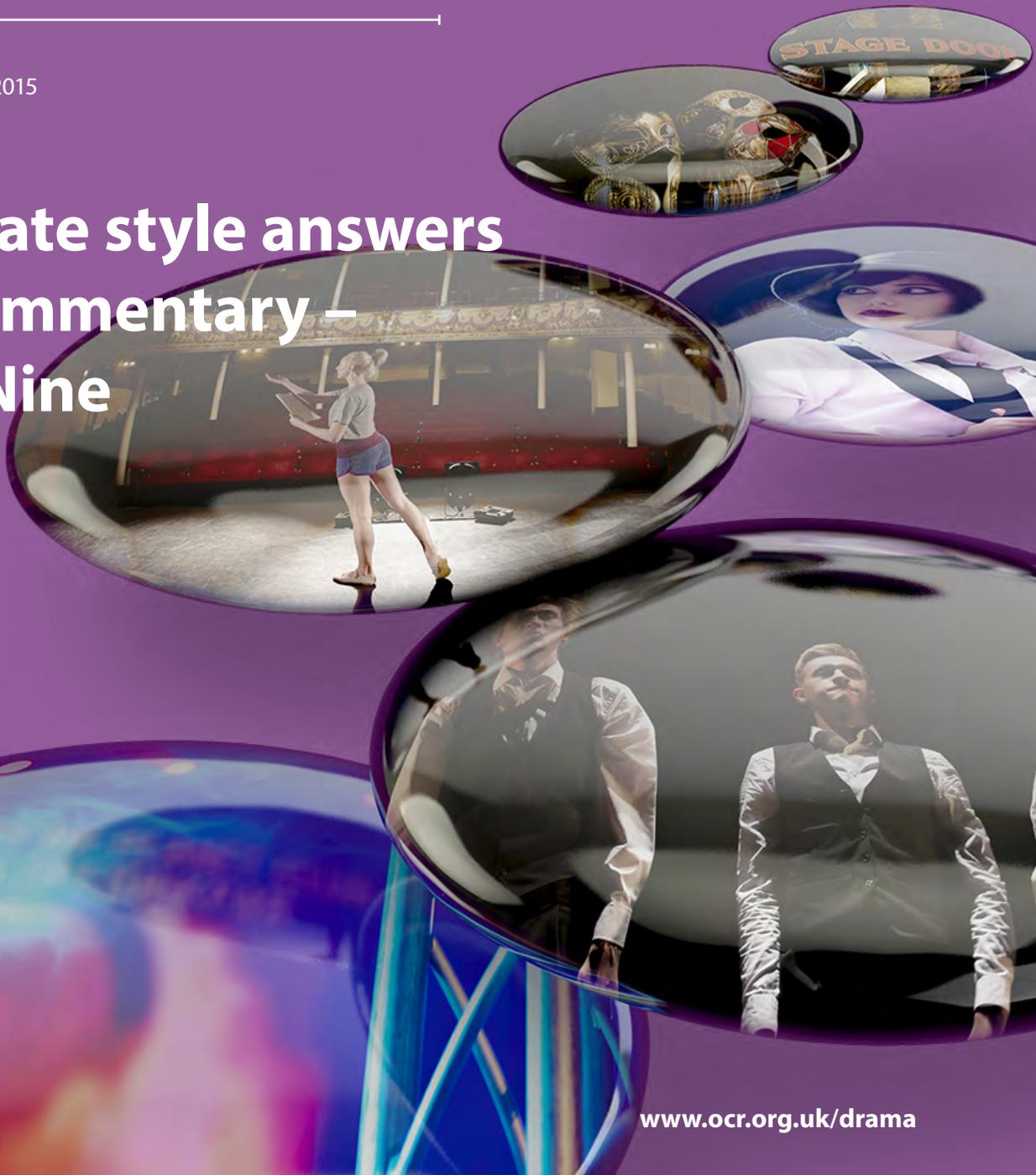
DRAMA AND THEATRE

H459

For first teaching in 2015

**Candidate style answers
with commentary –
Cloud Nine**

Version 1



Contents

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Introduction | 3 |
| High level answers | 4 |
| Question 1 Candidate style answer | 4 |
| Question 1 Commentary | 13 |
| Question 2 Candidate style answer | 14 |
| Question 2 Commentary | 16 |
| Mid level answers | 17 |
| Question 1 Candidate style answer | 17 |
| Question 1 Commentary | 26 |
| Question 2 Candidate style answer | 27 |
| Question 2 Commentary | 28 |
| Low level answers | 29 |
| Question 1 Candidate style answer | 29 |
| Question 1 Commentary | 38 |
| Question 2 Candidate style answer | 39 |
| Question 2 Commentary | 40 |

Introduction

This resource has been produced by the A Level Drama and Theatre assessor team to offer teachers an insight into how the assessment objectives are applied.

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers.

The sample assessment material for these answers and commentary can be found on the A Level Drama and Theatre web page and accessed via the following link:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce-drama-and-theatre-h059-h459-from-2016/>

Question 1 Candidate style answer – high level

Describe your directorial vision for staging this extract, and then annotate the extract to show how you would direct the actors to use their voices.

[30]

This extract starts off the whole play, so how I direct this will determine the style of the rest of the piece. I am aware of the links to postmodernism in Caryl Churchill's work in general and it is very marked in this play. That a hundred years passes between the acts but only twenty five for the characters, that Victoria is played by a dummy and that some men are played by women, some blacks by whites is postmodernism indeed. But this opening section is quite straightforward. We are being introduced to Brits abroad during the colonial times when half the world was under British rule.

We need to establish a sense of Empire, of everything and everyone in his or her place. The opening song has a Victorian parlour-song feel to it, like sitting round the piano singing for entertainment as there was little else. 'Gather round for England, rally to the flag' suggests that England is the over-arching power as represented by the Queen who is at home and the flag which is everywhere. The flagpole must be prominent in the scene.

Clive the administrator, the senior Brit in the locality is also the Father of the family as he introduces them. He claims that he is 'father' of many natives here, and later on has two of them thrashed for indiscipline to drive home the point of his power over everyone. Among his possessions is Betty, his wife, 'everything she is she owes to me.' In turn, Betty says that she 'lives for Clive'. The play is about gender inequality and this is a hallmark of the period – men were superior, women were owned by their fathers and then on marriage became the possessions of their husbands. Servants in the colonies were generally 'owned' by their white masters.

Betty and Clive talk about sending for things from England – must only be the best of British goods for them. His view is that they are not in the country 'to enjoy themselves' which is paralleled later by the view that women don't marry to 'enjoy themselves' either. His news for his wife is that explorer Harry Bagley is on his way to visit them. She pretends to dislike the man, 'a heavy drinker and a bore' but she finds him attractive and is secretly tempted to stray with him.

She has to tell Clive of an incident earlier in the day when Joshua the black houseboy had been rude to her and suggested she could fetch a book from inside the house herself as she had legs under the skirt. All the characters must be in Victorian costume in this act, so the women's skirts are demurely long. She wants Clive to be a man and reprimand Joshua, put him in his subservient place. But Clive feels a bond with Joshua and winks at him behind Betty's back when telling him off. He thinks Joshua feels the same about him – all men together against women that Clive doesn't understand at all. But Joshua secretly despises the white man and at the end of Act One we see Joshua aiming a gun at Clive to kill him.

The extract ends with Harry approaching, riding down the hill. So, we have an opening which on the surface has established a settled and agreeable way of life of Brits in a foreign land. However, we must also see beneath that, ripples of discontent, disloyalty, illicit sex and anger that are to come later.

To see the text extract, click here:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/242853-unit-h459-42-de-constructing-texts-for-performance-cloud-nine-sample-assessment-material.pdf>

You may find it useful to print off the sample assessment paper and match the text extract to these comments. Candidate comments should line up to the relevant part of the text.

Gathered round the piano, played by one of the women, Clive standing and clearly leading the group singing. His voice should dominate the others.

This is the start of the chorus and Clive should excel himself from here to ... England!

Clive solo to same tune, like a conductor of an orchestra he is at ease as he introduces the group.

There is particular pride in his voice for Betty (despite being played by a man) and his line must show that she is the icing on the cake of his somewhat smug life. He smiles broadly but it is clear she is his possession.

Betty's response is all subservient but at the same time taking some pride in being all that a man like Clive wants in his wife. She suggests quite happily that she has no ambition beyond pleasing him.

He now turns to Joshua his house servant and includes him in his assets with pride, dismissing the fact that he's black. This is both a bit shocking and quite funny to the audience.

Joshua belittles his black skin and proudly claims he has a white soul and like Betty, he only lives to please Clive. Comic lines.

Ignoring the fact he is played by a woman, his son Edward is introduced still with some pride in voice, but a warning to audience that all may not be well as the boy is being taught to be a man.

This is confirmed by the boy who admits to audience he is finding living up to expectations somewhat difficult.

His child Victoria, only a dummy, his mother-in-law and the governess is introduced dismissively as not worthy of any speeches.

They return to choral singing, but are mouthing words believed most passionately by Clive, so again his voice must dominate the rest, singing above, even if it is a bit out of tune.

The final uplifting chorus has them all contributing, despite what they think of it.

Betty is hesitant to ask Clive something.

He acknowledges her but bellows for his servant.

Joshua has anticipated his boss, and brings the drink for Clive only.

Betty starts a bit of a low grumble with complaining how long the day was – she has very little to do all day.

He responds with half a sentence saying he had a long ride.

She is little woman-like fearful, sensing trouble and hearing drums.

He brushes off fears and focuses on need for new boots – that's enough for the little woman. Somewhat patronising voice. Blister is focus back on him.

She comes up with some oh-diddums type sympathy.

He lays down the law about they have duties and cannot enjoy themselves, which for him is hypocritical as he enjoys everything he wants. He speaks like a preacher here.

The head round the waist is to shock her so she relies on him more.

The little dove line is very patronising, said like an adult to a child.

He is happy she is reading, keeps her out of mischief.

It is dismissive, sarcastic response to poetry.

She offers the piano as more evidence of doing what pleases him and suggest the children see him. He brushes that off with more important news for her and amusing to him.

She asks in faint hope that it will be good news.

He is like giving a treat to a child.

She plays along with his game, asking questions to guess who it is.

He humours her showing some patience, smiles indulgently.

He gives her and us more clues and the fact that the visitor admires Betty.

The final clue is conjuring tricks for Edward (ironic in view of what follows between Bagley and the boy).

A high note of triumph as he says the man's name.

She is flustered and starts to run him down to deflect her husband from realising that she likes Harry very much indeed.

She finishes by being very critical of Harry and hopes that's it.

Clive is not to be put off, telling her it's fine.

One brief glimpse of her true feelings in front of Clive – boredom.

He argues that her mother and governess Ellen is enough for Betty.

Funny line about her mother is ...her mother!

This is funny line, he seems unaware that his mother-in-law actually lives with them.

Betty tries to tell him gently.

He realises she is right.

To move on, Betty praises him.

He realises she must be bored and pretends concern for her.

She claims she just misses him – he is all she needs to be complete. She repeats his line about not there to enjoy themselves like a robot.

He is pleased and goes on to ask about her little female-only affectations – fainting and hysteria.

Calmly spoken.

He is sarcastic how peaceful everything is.

She speaks like a little girl getting round her indulgent daddy.

He refuses to hear complaints about Joshua.

Clive hears this line but pompously ignores it by saying that in his opinion, Joshua is devoted to him and all his possessions. And he has said it before – he speaks slowly to her to drive it home.

She pours out her complaints about Joshua and demands action.

He invites her to speak, with a sigh.

She won't give a full detail, so he gets irritated with her and insists with a strong voice and a hard face.

She finally admits that he wouldn't fetch a book from the piano which seems a small enough crime, but these are older times.

He continues to press her, irritated, about detail.

When she finally says the real complaint which was after all a) an insult and b) accurate, he shouts for Joshua leaving her to think at last he will be dealt with.

In a straightforward voice, he sets out the accusation to Joshua.

Cleverly twisting words and the actual facts, Joshua argues logically.

She is agitated that Clive is going to be fobbed off by that weasel Joshua but is slapped down by Clive as it being a man's place to deal with discipline.

Joshua cleverly twists the facts into a joke which implies that Betty is too thick to see.

And that she is deaf as well as stupid.

Clive has heard enough and moves from judge to jury and concludes that Joshua is to be reprimanded thoroughly by the man of the house.

Once is enough, Clive has put him back in his place.

He demands an apology to keep Betty quiet.

He gets it.

But undermines Betty by winking at Joshua, implying a link between them that a mere woman cannot grasp.

Back to business in his voice, Clive wants another drink (important things first) and then focuses on Harry coming on horseback. This suggests he has given Betty all the attention she is getting on her worry of the day.

He wants Harry to see Betty's white dress, to know that the woman is there, as he suspects about her secret thoughts for Harry.

She speaks softly, almost afraid of the man who is coming closer but says she is afraid of the sunset.

Everything going his way, Clive remarks on how the sunset brings it back to the British Empire on which the sun never set it was so big.

She whispers this line, not wishing to disturb Clive's thoughts on Empire.

Commentary

The first part of the question asks for the candidate's directorial vision for staging the extract. The second part asks for the extract to be annotated to show how the actors could be directed to use their voices.

The response deals with knowledge and understanding the intricacies of the extract within the context of the play and mentions postmodernism as an influencing stylistic factor. The juxtaposition of conflicting themes is hinted at.

It has a sense of what makes good staging and the opening parlour song and centralising of the flagpole heightens the importance of the British Empire.

The candidate shows a grasp of what staging would work best, though there might have been some discussion of the range of stage spaces available. Costumes are discussed and the below surface relationships, and subtexts, such as that between Clive and Joshua, are taken into account when directing the section.

This relationship in turn puts the status of women more into the place that Victorian society would have deemed proper and to reveal that in the scene would be a mark of some subtlety that a director adopts.

The annotations are comprehensive and cover almost every separate line with a real feel for the kind of steer an actor would welcome and a director would want to offer in the style of production chosen.

The question of using the voice is dealt with very thoroughly and this supports an overall marking in Level 5, excellent and well developed processes, demonstration of the impact of creative choices and understanding of how the text has been constructed. There is effective use of contexts to support the discussion.

Question 2 Candidate style answer – High level

As a director, explain and justify how you could use staging in a present-day performance of *Cloud Nine*.

[30]

As a director, I would first take note of Caryl Churchill's comment in the introduction to the text that it was originally worked up from experiments with Joint Stock Theatre (1978-79) who researched and devised around issues regularly. Churchill frequently collaborated with companies and directors. This one was sexual and gender politics and gender stereotyping, with power, colonialism and society in addition.

That nugget of information tells me that the themes are at the heart of the drama and the style (postmodernism) is the vehicle to convey the messages. It's also helpful to take account of the fact that Churchill's writing is generally regarded as left-wing; certainly as political but rarely in a narrow doctrinal, agit-prop way.

I would also have to be aware of the 'parameters of postmodernism' as applied to Churchill, if that's not a contradiction in terms, as it has no boundaries. The movement has since the 1960s explored truths, explanations and certainties that are not equal to everyone in a world where there are no set rules of artistic creation. There is no hierarchy of postmodernist authority, no principles of organisation.

It has embraced ambiguities and contradictions, rejected grand narratives, naturalism in an 'anything goes' approach that has baffled, inspired and bored people in equal measures. Some of the footprints of the genre apply to 'Cloud Nine' – parody and satire, fractured time, juxtaposition, non-linear narrative, and unpredictability. All that represents a heavy burden on the shoulders of any director at the outset.

To start to make sense of this, I would work through the play and decide the staging to suit the features of the genre that Churchill utilised. Establishing colonial Africa under British rule in the Victorian era is a firm requirement with characters presenting the faces of happy comfort that is soon shattered. The sing-along around a piano is a double nice touch – puts the play into some historical context and introduces a song to start the action moving along.

The restlessness of the native black population is crucial to the events, more than simply background, but we never see the revolution, the fire that kills Joshua's parents nor even the flogging of the black servants. They are reported, but influence the action and characters in various ways.

It's the internal battles in Clive's own household that preoccupy us and I would use a Brechtian technique of not allowing my actors to get too caught up in the depths their characters might require. They are demonstrating the parts. Churchill's writing lends itself to the alienation technique – quite short episodic events, fragmented narrative, multi-roling, transgender acting and the huge shock of 100 years which is only 25 passing between the acts.

Wife Betty's boredom is not a surprise to a contemporary audience, any more than being insulted by Joshua for not using her legs, her son becoming gay nor is her attraction to both Ellen and Harry. To Victorians such things would be unimaginable. The rank hypocrisy of Clive in maintaining respectable British values and decency while having sex with Mrs Saunders at every opportunity would be recognised but not explored on stage.

The need of Clive to maintain order with the Queen and God as the joint head of the world and women and black servants knowing their places in his house, is vital to his well-being. In the second act the older Clive loses his wife altogether to a freer, contemporary lifestyle. He is a broken man. Equally, to try to make his son Edward want to be a man, a soldier in the first act, only to see him openly gay in the second is all about losing control of what wasn't really his to run anyway.

It has been commented by some reviewers that there are so many layers of sexual perversion or possibility (according to taste) that it is hard to see beyond it. The attraction between Harry and Betty and her to him,

between Ellen and Betty, between Harry and the boy Edward, between Clive and Mrs Saunders, between Harry and Joshua do indeed present an array of sexual pairings some might see as bewildering.

Gerry's uncompromising monologue about oral sex on a train with a stranger is shocking and is meant to be, even to a metropolitan, liberal audience accepting of the open lesbianism of most of the second act. When Harry makes a clumsy pass at Clive and receives a shocked, disgusted rebuff - that may chime with more conventional audience members' feelings.

I would have my actors play them in Brechtian distance style and with close proxemics during the relevant sexual moments, with swift breakaways. For example, when Clive has his head up Mrs Saunders' skirt to achieve orgasm for himself and not quite for her, they are oppressively close. Elsewhere, there is a physical distancing that means the relationship, such as it is, can be only thin.

Some actors change roles into Act Two's outwardly family domestic dramas in a London a contemporary audience would still recognise. For this particularly the London park and earlier scenes in Africa, I would use projections as backdrops which would allow also some key phrases and words to be flashed up from the text to borrow yet another Brecht trick in making the audience think.

The moments when the child is briefly lost, the ceremony/ritual for an ancient sex goddess and when the dead soldier appears desperate for sex he couldn't find in life are all opportunities for extravagant acting, using all the space and supported by images and commentary on the screens above and to the side.

I would not be keen to stage this in a proscenium arch. I think it cries out for in-the-round or traverse. I would chose a large room, perhaps in a community centre or library, with audience either very close loosely seated or if possible tiered seated above so they look down on most of the action.

At the very least it needs no formal structures of wings and flats, no scenery, no actors' make up, no particular lighting or technical wizardry (beyond the screen projections) and only Victorian costumes in Act One though even they could be simply representative. My actors would tend to keep on the move with those speaking taking a more central position (if there is one) but all would be aware that they are never off stage so never stop being observed.

The after-wedding gathering at the end of the first act requires some more old fashioned position. It is an informal grouping with private (at front) conversation between Betty and Ellen, Harry and Betty before Clive makes a central speech dominating the room. Joshua needs to be at the very back or side so the audience and Edward see him raise the gun at Clive, but nobody else does. The blackout comes as we expect a shot to ring out. Without a blackout, I would have a freeze-frame and then the actors walk off into the interval to mingle with the audience, not hide away separately.

As part of my process I would swap actors around in different roles, much as directors such as Katie Mitchell have been known to do, before parts are firmed up. Even changing key players during a run, perhaps on the toss of a coin, is a fun way of keeping performances fresh as happens in the West End these days and prevents actors from 'owning' any particular role/interpretation.

The fractured time sequences may present confusion to some audiences, but programme notes would cover that but even without advanced warnings, the audience would still take freely from the themes and messages.

Today's audiences are experienced enough in the art of the shocking, the variety of sexual activities and lifestyle choices known to mankind and to look for a few messages that will make them think, to enjoy my production.

Commentary

The question asks candidates as if a director to explain and justify how they would use staging in a present-day performance of the whole play.

The response at once picks up on Churchill's own notes and the Joint Stock collaboration to discuss a variety of approaches to the themes, especially from a postmodern perspective. This theory is well understood by the candidate and it informs the work on directing the whole play.

The fingerprints of the genre are listed and it is recognised that they place a burden on the director, but the way it is described, the candidate suggests an ability to handle it.

The step into Brechtian techniques sounds natural the way they are explained and the necessary alienation is central to the concept.

On the question of relating it to a contemporary audience, the themes described will chime well with an audience today, and the candidate recognises that, though perhaps more and deeper discussion of that angle would have been welcome.

The whole is a very full response and covers a deal of narration of what is told in the two acts. This could have been curtailed in order for more time to address the staging and contemporary aspects with more breadth.

It is marked within Level 5, excellent and showing wide understanding.

Question 1 Candidate style answer – mid level

Describe your directorial vision for staging this extract, and then annotate the extract to show how you would direct the actors to use their voices.

[30]

My director's vision for this extract is to get the play going in the style in which it is to continue. It is described by Time Out magazine as 'sharp comedy with a serious purpose' and we have both in this extract.

The comedy is in the stuck-up words and mannerisms of Clive as the great white chief in a community of underlings, from his wife Betty to his black servant Joshua. The way he treats her is on one level quite funny like when he pretends to forget that his mother in law actually lives with them permanently. He is patronising and that must be funny to today's audience.

The serious purpose is the underlying current of racism, of colonials owning other countries and having life and death power over them and gender issues. Churchill wants Betty the wife played by a man in Act One and a woman in Act Two. She is making points about women's power and if things had been different a woman can be bold or not, just as much as a woman.

The same with black and white. In the Victorian times black people would have been servants if not actual slaves and they would belong to whites. This was a bit true even in Africa itself as well as when they came to live in Europe. Later on Joshua the black man who is played by a white will be asked to f*** by the white explorer Harry Bagley, as if he was just a piece of meat.

The relationship develops between Ellen the white school governess and Betty with lesbian undertones and we get a glimpse of the boy Edward liking being seduced by Harry. Heterosexual sex is there in the shape of Clive always fancying Mrs Saunders and even putting his head up her skirt later on for a thrill for him if not her.

All that follows, so the director of the opening section must establish the characters firmly and the message is that all is not what it seems. The British Empire was big as is said, but it did not last forever. The white man's rule ended. When they go home 100/25 years later, life is far from perfect. Sexuality is hidden in the opening, but by the end it is open and obvious.

To show Victorian respectability I would have the piano scene like one of those black and white photos from that time. The British union flag is fluttering but the skyline is Africa, so this is a juxtaposition of cultures. On stage is the little bit of Britain, while beyond the stage is a dangerous, rebellious and violent Africa that threatens them. They even speak still as Brits without really interacting with reality outside except to attack villages, burn them, kill people and flog others with whips.

To see the text extract, click here:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/242853-unit-h459-42-de-constructing-texts-for-performance-cloud-nine-sample-assessment-material.pdf>

You may find it useful to print off the sample assessment paper and match the text extract to these comments. Candidate comments should line up to the relevant part of the text.

Victorian scene with all sitting around the piano. It is a song, but a freeze frame in black and white might be appropriate to start with the backdrop gradually lighting colourful and bright. The singing should probably be awful.

They should all hit the high notes on 'England', almost like a football crowd but not quite.

They point to the flag on its mast, it is the symbol of authority.

Clive is proud of his family. He owns them, so he should make it loud and clear as if talking to idiots. I would stop the song here and make him speak the lines.

He puts his arms round her to show he owns her and makes it like a sexual joke that he has dreamt of her.

But she owes her world to him, so he is very clear on that.

She is subservient to her husband and speaks these lines as if she really believes them but the audience knows she is just pretending for his sake.

Clive makes a joke about the fact that he is black but you hardly notice as if Joshua's race is not important but being white is.

Joshua plays along to keep the boss happy and says he hates his tribe of people (he doesn't) and only lives for his master (he doesn't).

Played by a woman helps show that he is becoming more effeminate, so Clive speaks as if through gritted teeth.

The boy tells us quietly he'd like to help his father but is finding it hard, as he is visibly already effeminate.

He laughs off the other women in his group as they are not important.

They all resume the singing in the same way as before with Clive taking the loudest role and is just out of tune like he could care less.

This is the climax of the song that makes Clive very proud and puffed up, but the others just nod along.

In Victorian times, spouses called each other Mr and Mrs, so this is postmodern.

He takes the drink from Joshua without saying thanks, why would he, he is Clive.

She starts a female high pitched moaning, a sort of irritating voice that goes on and on and gets a man annoyed, which Clive is.

The drums indicate trouble brewing among the natives so she should be afraid, but he is more interested in the serious matter of his blister and getting new boots. She like a good wife focuses on his foot.

Clive's style is like a teacher who knows it all and likes the sound of his own voice. So, this is where he lectures her about not enjoying herself, which was frowned on in those times. He tells her about chopping off heads to make himself look brave.

He laughs at her and calls her a little dove which is insulting to women.

Reading is good, he smiles, as if to say, is that all?

Poetry has no point so he puts it on that she is delicate. Poetry is all she can manage.

Playing the piano is in the same league as reading, not much to him.

His news for her is of the most interest to him and he wants her to share it with him.

He gives her clues and plays a sort of game. this appears to be lovey-dovey and affectionate, but he is an adulterer and also suspicious of her true feelings about Harry.

He is pretending to flatter Harry. The great admirer line is when he deliberately looks at her to see if she shows joy.

The final clue is not very hard, implying she is not up to his intellectual standards.

He says Harry Bagley loudly and like a shout.

She pretends to be cross with him for speaking of Harry to cover her embarrassment at being told he admires her and then gets stronger by really insulting the man so her husband will not be suspicious.

She must speak reluctantly and then hang on to anything to break boredom.

Now she is dismissive of others, Ellen ad her own mother.

Clive either doesn't understand what is going on in his own house or pretends not to in order to play mind games with Betty.

The thought occurs suddenly to him that she might be bored with her life. Asks slightly puzzled.

She claims that it is ok and part of not enjoying life there.

He speaks with relief and wonders if she has fainted or had hysteria in the absence of anything else to do today.

Very brave, but softly, she asks him for one favour.

She hesitates before saying, Joshua.

He brushes her aside showing he trusts the black man. He explains as if to a child and probably for the millionth time.

She lists two complaints and then demands he be spoken to as she can see Clive not wanting to do anything about it.

He sighs and listens for a moment to get the picture.

When she doesn't like to repeat it (she is a lady) he goes close to insist in her face.

She pours it all out now. He asks questions, puzzled that this is all it is bothering her.

She repeats the insult he said, in his voice so it is imitated and he at once shouts for Joshua. He appears to be angry.

He puts the charge to Joshua calmly and softly.

Joshua gets more detail as he had forgotten it? Or had he?

He says sarcastically, she has the book, what's the problem?

Betty is starting to feel he is getting away with it, but her husband doesn't want her interfering on his role as head of the house.

Now Joshua lies that he made a joke. The audience suspects it is a lie so gets clue that Joshua is not as nice as he appears in this scene.

A bit of cross examination here which shows that Clive is wondering how to judge this one.

When Betty wearily lets it go, Clive takes on the big criticism of Joshua in a loud voice. It goes on a bit so Joshua gets the message.

Joshua accepts the criticism without expression.

He apologises in a sarcastic way. Over the top.

Clive's wink to Joshua undermines Betty's authority and shows Clive to be a shit.

Clive is now in complete command again demanding another drink and for the children to be brought to him. He is like royalty speaking this. He sees Harry approaching in the dusk and criticises him, adding to his own importance.

Clive orders her to show her white dress in the gloom, as he watches her from corner of eye to see if she is getting excited to see Harry. When he says I wonder what he saw he means what did he see in her?

He is back to the British Empire and his important part in it again.

Her comment that Harry looks so small is softly said and Clive if he heard it would agree about another man.

Commentary on Question 1 – mid level

The first part of the question asks for the candidate's directorial vision for staging the extract. The second part asks for the extract to be annotated to show how the actors could be directed to use their voices.

With a quote from Time Out this response sets off to a promisingly competent start. It tackles the issues of gender and sex, the fact that the message is not straightforward and considers some aspects of the juxtaposition of a bit of Britain onstage while a hostile world is outside.

The point about Brits behaving as Bits indoors but as violent people outside is well made, but sheds no real light on how a director would present that contrast.

It is quite far ranging and perhaps a more in depth consideration of some of the aspects of staging this with different genders, ages and skin colours would have been useful.

The annotation is plentiful and quite comprehensive. Not all of it is devoted to voice, but it does show understanding of the process and refers to some of the contexts about this extract.

It is marked at the top of Level 3, with clear understanding of how directors' choices influence the message, clear demonstration of knowledge of contexts and how the performance text is put together.

Question 2 Candidate style answer – mid level

As a director, explain and justify how you could use staging in a present-day performance of *Cloud Nine*.

[30]

This play is about sex. There are other themes such as colonialism and hypocrisy, but above all it is a play about the many facets of sex. It is about sex, sexual repression and changing attitudes to sex. It is about the urges driven by hormones that affect everyone. It is relevant and absorbing for a contemporary audience.

It is fluid and one person in quite a short time can have conflicting views about it and reactions to hormones. Ella is after Betty but then marries Harry. The relationship between Edward, Gerry, Victoria and Lin is very modern, but also very confused. Harry, who is well described as an explorer, can cheerfully have a relationship with a young boy and then go with Joshua and then have a shot at Clive and then finally marry a woman.

The fluidity is also apparent in changing worlds. The days of the British ruling Africa were numbered and only twenty five years on, but it feels like 100, the world in England has changed. Sex is very different now in many ways, with transgenders, same sex marriages and a range of different sexualities you 'identify' with rather than are.

I think the most moving scene is Scene Three in Act Two when Lin's brother Bill who has just been killed in the army in Northern Ireland appears just after the women have grabbed on a willing Martin and made him have sex. Bill is dead but says he has come for a fuck. There is a mini monologue from him that he can't get out when he is on army duty and when he is out he's scared, bored or shit scared. And all he wants is sex.

It is sad because we know he can't have it. Too late. It may suggest we should get it while we can. Or Churchill may be saying that even a heterosexual army man is not satisfied. She is also comparing the great British empire in Africa with all that is left today – Northern Ireland. That is making a political point which is perhaps what she wants to do.

I would, for example, direct Act Two Scene Two in this way. It is set in a public park with a bench with Edward working as a gardener and Gerry on the bench. A little while ago we saw Gerry recall his casual sex on a train with a random stranger, now he is talking to Edward who was the little boy abused by Harry in the previous act.

They argue about last night when Gerry didn't come home, so we know they share a house. Edward keeps gardening so there is a distance between them. Gerry decides to go to the pub so Edward against Gerry's wishes says he'll go as well and leaves to get ready.

The focus switches to the child Cathy on a swing. She has been there all along. Then walking in comes Betty, Victoria now grown up and her husband Martin. Betty is full of problems at living on her own now she is old. She thinks son-in-law Martin hates her. We then get a monologue but addressed to his wife from Martin. A lot of thoughts about sex, getting it in another place and their future. I would put him at the stage left and talking to audience and her at same time A few minutes later I would repeat on Martin's second monologue, which is a heart to heart. There are no other monologues quite like that in the play, but there are in *Vinegar Tom* and *Top Girls* by Churchill.

The children in the play are interesting. Edward as a boy has sex with a man, Harry and Lin's daughter Cathy is 4 or 5. The freedom they have, the idea of sex with men in the first and toy guns in the second, is clearly Churchill warning us against stereotyping. These are important scenes that I would direct closely.

I would keep to directions as written in the script and make each person coming on left and going off right quite quick so there is a fast pace throughout. If it was a film, I'd use dissolve between each entrance and exit. I would also try out a variety of accents. Perhaps in Africa they talked posh, but in London they might talk more like ordinary people speak even today. It would make a change.

To make the audience closer and to feel more involved, but not in a Brecht way, I would chose in the round, with little space to spare between audience and on the stage. It should feel a bit claustrophobic which would reflect the lack of freedom women had in the late 1800s and many people felt in the late 1900s.

When it came out in 1979 it was regarded as edgy and a bit raunchy. Today it will not have the same comments, but it still has a powerful message that we are not defined by our gender, that you can't be owned by other more controlling people and women still have a long way to go to achieve the feminist freedom dreamed of by previous generations.

This play lives beyond its period - it is not to be stereotyped either.

Commentary

The question asks candidates as if a director to explain and justify how they would use staging in a present-day performance of the whole play.

The blunt assertion on opening that the play is about sex is hard to refute. The lengthy response goes on to argue how the theme and other issues recur throughout to explain one approach directors could use.

The response rejects the Brechtian approach and settles for an in-the-round one which is argued plausibly and with some, but perhaps not enough, justification to support it fully.

There is a sense of contexts and of how a text is put together to convey meaning. There could have been more focus on the staging types in general. The contrasting accents between Africa and London were an interesting thought.

It is more implied than actually stated that a production is being prepared for a contemporary audience. More was needed on that.

The response is marked in Level 3, clear understanding, exposition and knowledge of processes.

Question 1 Candidate style answer – low level

Describe your directorial vision for staging this extract, and then annotate the extract to show how you would direct the actors to use their voices.

[30]

This extract is the opening of the whole play so my vision for directing it would be to set up a stage like it says, on a verandah. This is a flat area outside some doors, usually a bit higher up than the garden. It is often seen in hot countries and this is where the play is set in Africa in Act One. There is a flagpole with the flag of Great Britain dangling on it and that is important because they are all British and proud of their flag.

It starts with a song which is a technique Caryl Churchill uses from time to time to tell the story. Well, the story here is that they are all Victorians in the days when Great Britain was in charge of Africa and made everybody obey British laws. Some of these are still going today in Africa and India. It is also about the time when men and women were not equal at all. The directorial has to show that so that the point of the play comes over.

She has made it so that some of the women are played by men and some black people by white people. She has gays and lesbians in it but we don't see much of that in the opening. I think it is about building a scene that tells us one thing before the next scenes come along and changes people's views of life. What is wrong with being gay or black? Nothing, obviously, but back then days it was a crime.

Betty spends all day at home reading poetry and playing the piano but she has servants and nothing else to do except wait for her husband and get lonely. He doesn't know this. Later he will start going with Mrs Saunders but in this scene we think he is an important man and a good one. He lets Betty complain going on and on about Joshua who was doing a hard job and his legs were tired while she just sat there and ordered him to get her book. Clive thinks his wife is soft and delicate and can't use her legs to walk.

Joshua and Clive get on but later Joshua will shoot Clive in the head because his father and mother were killed by British soldiers. Clive and Betty get on when he tells her that Harry is coming. He is an explorer and later on he shows he has been having it off with the boy child Edward. Later on Mrs Saunders will arrive and be the love interest for Clive as his own wife is delicate and reads poetry all day.

The job of the director is to tell actors what to do, how to talk and where to move. I would draw diagrams with the moves on and tell them when to speak loud or soft. This scene is quite jolly but later on it will turn darker and unhappy. Certainly when they get older in London, it will be very unhappy indeed for most of them.

To see the text extract, click here:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/242853-unit-h459-42-de-constructing-texts-for-performance-cloud-nine-sample-assessment-material.pdf>

You may find it useful to print off the sample assessment paper and match the text extract to these comments. Candidate comments should line up to the relevant part of the text.

It says family but they are not all real family. Joshua is the servant but Clive likes to think of him as his own boy.

It is a song so they can all use their voices to sing.

It is a song of people who are homesick for England which is why they keep singing about it. Some audiences can like being introduced to the actors with a song.

Clive sings like an opera that this is his family and starts with Betty who is a man so some people might find that strange, but he sings like he is proud of having her and that she isn't anything without him. It is a kind of love song.

In them days women didn't own land or houses or even the clothes they wore.

She sings she is happy to be what men want her to be.

A jewel is worth a lot of money so Clive is singing that Joshua is worth more than Betty is worth, not a lot.

He doesn't notice his own skin colour.

Joshua sings like Betty that she just wants to be what men want.

Edward is a young boy so is played by a woman which will be better. He is a bit gay and likes to play with dolls but he sings he is doing his best to be like everyone else.

Victoria is a dummy, really a baby but they can't use a real baby.

Clive says he isn't going to make speeches but he has just made one in song.

They gather round the flag again and finish the song with a big chorus. Everybody wants to go to England from north and south and east and west.

Clive likes to drink.

Betty talks interrupting Clive's drink after a long hard day working and on a long ride on horseback in the bushes.

She has heard drums. In her head, if she is not all there.

He wants to show her his blister and she feels sorry for him as a wife should.

He talked to men who cut heads off people and hang them round their waists. This is the real world, not sitting around all day.

Then he says it was a joke. She has no sense of humour he thinks.

She has read a little poetry He thinks this is crazy but goes along with it. You want to keep a mad person happy.

She played the piano – big deal.

Now he has news for her in her sleepy life.

He says proudly that he has arranged for a visitor to come. She asks a lot of stupid questions instead of saying who is it?

The visitor is an explorer who has been hunting lions and is a bit odd. He admires her which is also odd.

Now she knows it's Harry Bagley, but starts to waffle on about why didn't he just tell her and he is just a drunk and boring. A bit like Clive, she thinks.

She feel monotony and says he will break that up for her. She has Ellen and she has her mother, but obviously doesn't think much of them.

He has done his best and tried to arrange company for her but there is no pleasing her.

She praises him as she should but he still thinks she is bored.

Because she is delicate she might have fainted or gone into hysterics so he is concerned and asks like a caring man.

He smiles he is pleased all is tranquil but she still wants to moan, so she starts off about Joshua.

He is concerned about her and asks to help her.

She cries like a baby that Joshua doesn't like her. Nobody likes her. She has to be careful because Joshua is trusted by Clive for eight years which is a long time to trust someone.

She is still crying like a baby and can't say properly how he was rude to her.

By now Clive is getting a bit pissed off with her. She moaned but won't say what he said to her.

She is still sobbing and finally brings it out what Joshua is supposed to have said about the legs she has under her dress, which obviously she does have.

When Joshua is called he is asked about the afternoon.

He says that she has the book. He gave it to her.

She tries to make a bad situation worse by speaking but Clive doesn't want her to.

He says it was a joke which she didn't get.

He says she is deaf.

He says she heard a different voice.

Now she gives it up, her complaint.

Joshua is told off by an angry Clive.

She expects an apology, so he gives her one. He is smiling and she is still looking upset with her voice shaking and her mouth turned down.

Clive winks at Joshua to say good man, carry on.

Clive needs another drink as he likes them.

He sees Harry and orders her to wave as he is too tired. He calls Harry a hothead for coming when it's nearly dark.

Betty wants Harry to see them as it's dark so he says let him see your white dress glowing.

She is looking into the sunset and is blinded.

Clive goes on about the British empire again and how proud he is.

She isn't interested just in Harry on the hillside.

Commentary

The first part of the question asks for the candidate's directorial vision for staging the extract. The second part asks for the extract to be annotated to show how the actors could be directed to use their voices.

While making some statements broadly leading in the direction of addressing the question, they are quite generalised and without detail. It is more of a narrative account than a discursive response to the question.

There could have been more on types of staging and how this scene would best fit. Some of the characters are described quite accurately but, again, they lack detail to support a full directorial approach.

The annotations are concerned with voice and some other aspects, but do not add much to the given stage directions and generally do not reflect part of a total directorial vision.

The mark is in Level 2, basic references to processes, basic demonstration of a director's artistic choices influencing how meaning is conveyed and basic understanding of performance text. There is a little reference to contexts.

Question 2 Candidate style answer – low level

As a director, explain and justify how you could use staging in a present-day performance of *Cloud Nine*.

[30]

For my stage space I would use a theatre in-the-round space such as Manchester's Royal Exchange Theatre. Here the stage space is circular with raked audience seating and can seat up to 700 people.

The stage space should be a large open space because it needs to accommodate a large variety of characters such as the Chorus, the guards and Antigone in this play. In the opening scene alone we see twelve characters if only one person plays the Chorus.

Despite being in the round, the theatre does offer several chances for entrances and exits which is useful when new characters enter. Although, the stage space doesn't really change much so when in a present day performance of *Cloud Nine* is going to have to know that the play is in two different parts. The first part is 100 years ago but everybody is older by only twenty five years.

In Africa in the bit where Clive has just flogged the servants who have done something wrong with all the others watching, he goes into his house and Betty embraces him. She feels sorry he had to flog the servants. She says poor Clive.

He says you can tame an animal so far, meaning they are like animals, the servants. It is racist because they are black. He spreads his arms as he walks about in a temper. He says the continent is his enemy. He now has the blacks he has flogged as his enemy.

She follows him around and says she is here for him. He says he trusts her because he has worked out that she and Harry have been doing things they shouldn't.

She goes on her knees in front of him which stops him walking about and says she is sorry. She says he didn't want to do anything so she is sorry. She did it from boredom. He says she was weak in sex which he didn't know.

He gets away from her as she gets up and starts walking around again. He says she is evil, all women are evil. He talks in a confused way and says she hasn't been unfaithful but she has.

She moves after him in an agitated way saying no no no. Joshua has seen them snogging.

He doesn't know what to do and stands still thinking what to do. He says he will shoot Harry Bagley but he is his friend. He says if he shot her he would get applause from everyone but no he will not as it was lust. He sits down to think a bit more.

She is happy she is not going to be shot and says forgive me. They go out stage left arm in arm like it is all ok now.

From stage right comes the boy Edward who is creeping about hoping nobody sees him and looks all around the floor for the doll that someone dropped. He finds it and picks it up. He is a boy but likes dolls.

Suddenly from stage right comes Joshua the servant who sees him and calls him a baby cissy girly. Joshua is a man and does not think Edward should play with dolls. Joshua leaves stage left. Edward talks to his mum Betty. She smacked him before so now she says sorry and cuddles him.

She has done lots wrong this Betty and has to keep saying sorry. Joshua comes back from stage left and goes to leave stage right. Betty tells him to get blue thread from sewing box but he is just standing by the door stage right and says she's got legs.

Betty asks Edward to do something about it and he speaks like a white man and tells Joshua not to talk like that. He does this to get back at Joshua for making comments about the dolls. He says you move when I speak to you

Commentary

The question asks candidates as if a director to explain and justify how they would use staging in a present-day performance of the whole play.

The response reads more like an account of what happens than a plan for the use of appropriate staging. In that sense it is concerned with the details of individual stage movements, but neglects consideration of thrust or proscenium or whatever. There is talk of an upstairs needed in Africa.

Stylistically it is not very clear of what is to be produced. There is recognition of stark contrasts between the two acts, but these thoughts need expanding and exemplifying rather. The conclusion about sex is an important point and deals with the contemporary audience aspect of the question, but without breadth or reflection.

As with Q1 it is marked in Level 2, basic on the criteria because it has some promising starts, but doesn't develop them, so shows little grasp of the play's significances.



We'd like to know your view on the resources we produce. By clicking on the 'Like' or 'Dislike' button you can help us to ensure that our resources work for you. When the email template pops up please add additional comments if you wish and then just click 'Send'. Thank you.

Whether you already offer OCR qualifications, are new to OCR, or are considering switching from your current provider/awarding organisation, you can request more information by completing the Expression of Interest form which can be found here:

www.ocr.org.uk/expression-of-interest

OCR Resources: *the small print*

OCR's resources are provided to support the delivery of OCR qualifications, but in no way constitute an endorsed teaching method that is required by OCR. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the content, OCR cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions within these resources. We update our resources on a regular basis, so please check the OCR website to ensure you have the most up to date version.

This resource may be freely copied and distributed, as long as the OCR logo and this small print remain intact and OCR is acknowledged as the originator of this work.

OCR acknowledges the use of the following content:
Square down and Square up: alexwhite/Shutterstock.com

Please get in touch if you want to discuss the accessibility of resources we offer to support delivery of our qualifications:
resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk

Looking for a resource?

There is now a quick and easy search tool to help find **free** resources for your qualification:

www.ocr.org.uk/i-want-to-find-resources/

www.ocr.org.uk/alevelreform

OCR Customer Contact Centre

General qualifications

Telephone 01223 553998

Facsimile 01223 552627

Email general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

OCR is part of Cambridge Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge. *For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored.*

© **OCR 2017** Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England. Registered office 1 Hills Road, Cambridge CB1 2EU. Registered company number 3484466. OCR is an exempt charity.



Cambridge
Assessment

