

Qualification accredited

The final first teach date for A Level Drama and Theatre (H459) is **September 2026**. The final assessment opportunity will be **Summer 2028**.

There is no resit opportunity.

Sample Assessment Material

A Level

Drama and Theatre

Cambridge OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Drama and Theatre

H459/49

Version 1.3

ocr.org.uk/aleveldramaandtheatre

Introduction

This is Sample Assessment Material (SAM). It is an example exam paper that we publish alongside a new specification to help illustrate the intended style and structure of our question papers.

During the lifetime of the qualification, updates to the question paper template may happen. We always recommend you look at the most recent set of past papers where available.

We also produce two further specific resources to support you with using this SAM:

- An assessment story where we explain the research we have undertaken during the development of the qualification and how consultation with teachers, students and schools has helped shape our assessment approach.
- Annotated SAMs in which we take you through the key points of the assessment and highlight the different types of questions your students will experience in the exam.

Summary of updates			
Date	Version	Page number	Summary of change
September 2025	1.0	Cover, page 2, back cover	Creation of Sample Assessment Material wrapper pages. Accessibility changes. Text replacement.
January 2026	1.1	Cover, copyright information	Updated copyright acknowledgement
March 2026	1.2	Cover	Withdrawal information of qualification including final first teach date and final assessment opportunity date.
June 2026	1.3	Cover	Component code updated.



Date – Morning/Afternoon

Sample Question Paper

Cambridge OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Drama and Theatre

H459/49 Deconstructing Texts for Performance

Nell Gwynn

Time allowed: 1 hour 45 minutes



No extra materials are needed.



Please write clearly in black ink. **Do not write in the barcodes.**

Centre number

--	--	--	--	--

Candidate number

--	--	--	--

First name(s) _____

Last name _____

INSTRUCTIONS

- Use black ink. You can use an HB pencil, but only for annotation lines.
- Write your answer to each question in the space provided. If you need extra space use the lined pages at the end of this booklet. The question numbers must be clearly shown.
- Answer **all** the questions.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is **60**.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets [].
- This document has **16** pages.

ADVICE

- Read each question carefully before you start your answer.

Scene Two**The Attitudes**

Later that same day, after the performance, NELL is gathering spilled oranges from the yard. CHARLES HART arrives from backstage and calls to her, which takes her by surprise. He is something of a star.

5

HART. Gwynn!

NELL. Mr Hart!

HART. What was that?

10

NELL. Sir?

HART. What exactly did you think you were doing?

NELL. I was just jesting.

HART. Your audacity astounds me.

15

NELL. Sir, I –

HART. You've got no right to interrupt the prologue.

NELL. I was only trying / to help.

HART. In the middle of Mr Spiggett's performance!

20

NELL. I didn't mean / to –

HART. You can't just stride up here and talk to him!

NELL. I'm sorry.

25

HART. Talk to everyone!

Beat.

NELL. What?

HART. Talk to everyone. First rule of acting. Include your audience.

30

NELL. Sir?

HART. Come along. Put the fruit down and get up here.

NELL. Me?!

HART. Do you want to learn or not?

35

NELL. Learn?

HART. Acting.

NELL. But I'm a woman, Mr Hart!

HART. Project. 'Mr Hart!'

NELL. Mr Hart!

40

Continuing as he helps her onto the stage...

HART (*demonstrating*). Mr Hart!

NELL (<i>louder</i>). Mr Hart!	
HART (<i>indicating her diaphragm</i>). From here!	
NELL (<i>louder</i>). Mr Hart!	45
HART (<i>demonstrating</i>). Mr Hart!	
NELL (<i>louder</i>). Mr Hart!	
HART (<i>indicating her diaphragm</i>). From here!	
NELL (<i>louder</i>). Mr Hart!	
HART (<i>louder, faster</i>). Again!	50
NELL (<i>louder, faster</i>). Mr Hart!	
HART. Yes!	
NELL. Mr Hart!	
HART. More!	
NELL. Mr Hart!	55
HART (<i>building to a climax</i>). Say my name!	
NELL (<i>yelling</i>). Mr Hart!	
HART. We'll work on that. Now, being heard is the first lesson. But being felt – conveying the consumptive passions which overwhelm you, as... (<i>Acts each state out.</i>) as your lover gasps her final breath. Or the grim sense of callous death which stirs your soul when you spy Old Hamlet's ghost. Try this. 'Terror.'	60
<i>He pulls a terrified face. She looks at him awkwardly.</i>	65
Come along!	
<i>He pulls the face again. NELL copies.</i>	
Terror is the first of the attitudes. 'Fear aroused by an object of dismay.' There! Eyebrows raised. Nostrils drawn up. The eyes and mouth are wide. Wide, I say!	70
<i>She strikes a compelling pose.</i>	
Hm. Let's try anger. Fury rises in your bowels. Furrow your forehead. Flare the nostrils and the lips like so.	75
<i>He demonstrates. She copies.</i>	
Now cry out, with all the blood-swelling torment of your heart. Aargh!	
NELL. Aargh!	80
HART (<i>simultaneously</i>). Aarrgh!	
NELL. AAARGH!	
NELL. Aargh!	
HART (<i>simultaneously</i>). Aarrgh!	
NELL. AAARGH!	85

HART. Tolerable. Anger often comes naturally to women.

NELL. Mr Hart!

HART. Well projected. Why don't you try the next one on your own? Despair. 'The absolute privation of hope'; the lost love, the shattered soul. Tears rise, breath catches. 90

He watches her. She is more naturalistic than one might expect.

Make it bigger. Play it to the gods, they'll never see that at the back. More, Gwynn! Allow it to consume you utterly. 95

She gives a small look upwards, her eyes filling with tears.

What are you doing? Are you quite all right? 100

She is on the verge of sobbing.

NELL. I'm – I just –

HART. Nell! I'm sorry. It wasn't a criticism.

NELL sobs loudly.

Nell?! Nell! 105

She drops out of the act immediately.

NELL. I'm just acting, sir.

HART. Well, blow me down, I thought it was real.

NELL. I was only pretending. 110

HART. But it was convincing. Moving, even. How very intriguing.

NELL. What's next?

HART. Love.

NELL. Love? 115

HART. Yes, love. 'Pleasant delight with reference to the object of affection.'

NELL (*cheekily*). You mean your lover?

HART. Yes I do. It's the final and most complex of the attitudes. It's not only on the face, but in the very blood. It must possess your entire being. 120

NELL (*begins to flirt... just a little*). Show me how to do love.

HART (*touching his heart*). It'll be in there. 125

NELL. Tell me. I'd like to hear it.

HART. Well. Love is 'complete and utter indifference to everything, except the one you admire'.

NELL follows his instructions with flirtatious confidence; this is one role she knows how to play. HART, won over, finds it hard to concentrate. 130

Eyebrows raised slightly. Head inclined towards the cause of love. Lips moisten softly with vapours which rise from the heart. Eyes connect with the object of affection. 135

NELL. I look into your eyes.

HART (*under her spell*). Yes. Yes, you do.

NELL. Might I step towards my 'object of affection'? 140

HART. Affection, yes. Step towards / your –

NELL. My object of –

HART. Object of affection.

NELL. Desire.

HART. Or – or desire. Yes. 145

NELL. I'm good, aren't I?

HART (*mesmerised*). You are – surprisingly good.

NELL. 'Love.'

HART. 'Love.' 150

They both stand close to each other, there is a moment of intensity. A beat. He breaks the spell.

Um, yes. Excellent. Excellent.

NELL. You all right, sir? 155

HART (*flustered*). What? Yes. No. Exactly.

She looks out over the audience.

You like it up here?

NELL. S'all right.

HART. All right? There's nothing like it, when it's full. Packed in, like pippins on a cart; and all of them, looking at you. It's like no other feeling in the world. 160

NELL. You *do* like it.

HART. Somehow I've never quite felt myself anywhere else. Which is ironic, now I think of it. 165

NELL. Odd, though. Pretending for a living.

HART. I suppose it is a strange existence. My father has two dozen scars on his back for his efforts. 170

NELL. They whipped him?

HART. They said it was 'the devil's work!
But that was before. We're all right for now,
as long as Charles keeps his head. So to
speak. 175

NELL. If they thought *you* were sinners, lucky
they didn't come down the Madam's.

HART. Of course. Sorry.

NELL. Oh, I don't do it any more. Swapped 180
selling my oyster for my oranges, didn't I.

HART. And does it make you happy? Hawking?

NELL. S'pose. I never thought to ask.

Pause.

HART. Listen. If you were willing to work... 185
hard, perhaps I could teach you.

NELL. Teach me?

HART. You would have to commit. Every day,
at dusk we'd meet, for a month. And we'd
practise. And then, if you show aptitude, I 190
might take you to meet Mr Killigrew. What
do you say?

NELL. Why?

HART. I don't quite know.

NELL. I don't think so. 195

HART. Why not?!

NELL. There's no point.

HART. You don't know that.

NELL. I might not be any good.

HART. Then go back to your oranges. 200

NELL. And I'm a woman!

HART. What have you got to lose? Say yes.

NELL. Mr Hart.

HART. Say yes!

Pause. Will she? Won't she? 205

NELL. All right. Yes. Yes!

HART. Good! Well, till tomorrow then!

He goes to leave.

NELL. Sir?

HART. Gwynn? 210

NELL. Thank you, Mr Hart.

He gives her a look. She projects.
MR HART!

EXTRA ANSWER SPACE

If you need extra space use this lined page. You must write the question numbers clearly in the margin.

A large area of lined paper for writing answers. It features a vertical margin line on the left side and horizontal dotted lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page.



CAMBRIDGE OCR

A Level Drama and Theatre

H459/49 Deconstructing texts for performance: Nell Gwynn

SAMPLE MARK SCHEME

Duration: 1 hour 45 minutes

MAXIMUM MARK 60

Version: Sample

This document consists of 12 pages

PREPARATION FOR MARKING**RM Assessor**

1. Make sure that you have accessed and completed the relevant training packages for on–screen marking: *RM assessor Online Training*; *OCR Essential Guide to Marking*.
2. Make sure that you have read and understood the mark scheme and the question paper for this unit. These are posted on the RM Cambridge Assessment Support Portal <http://www.rm.com/support/ca>
3. Log–in to RM Assessor and mark the **required number** of practice responses (“scripts”) and the **required number** of standardisation responses.

YOU MUST MARK 10 PRACTICE AND 10 STANDARDISATION RESPONSES BEFORE YOU CAN BE APPROVED TO MARK LIVE SCRIPTS.

TRADITIONAL

Before the Standardisation meeting you must mark at least 10 scripts from several centres. For this preliminary marking you should use **pencil** and follow the **mark scheme**. Bring these **marked scripts** to the meeting.

MARKING

1. Mark strictly to the mark scheme.
2. Marks awarded must relate directly to the marking criteria.
3. The schedule of dates is very important. It is essential that you meet the 50% and 100% (traditional 50% Batch 1 and 100% Batch 2) deadlines. If you experience problems, you must contact your Team Leader (Supervisor) without delay.
4. If you are in any doubt about applying the mark scheme, consult your Team Leader by telephone, email or via the scoris messaging system.
5. Work crossed out:
 - a. where a candidate crosses out an answer and provides an alternative response, the crossed out response is not marked and gains no marks
 - b. if a candidate crosses out an answer to a whole question and makes no second attempt, and if the inclusion of the answer does not cause a rubric infringement, the assessor should attempt to mark the crossed out answer and award marks appropriately.

6. Always check the pages (and additional objects if present) at the end of the response in case any answers have been continued there. If the candidate has continued an answer there then add a tick to confirm that the work has been seen.
7. There is a NR (No Response) option. Award NR (No Response)
- if there is nothing written at all in the answer space
 - OR if there is a comment which does not in any way relate to the question (e.g. 'can't do', 'don't know')
 - OR if there is a mark (e.g. a dash, a question mark) which isn't an attempt at the question.
- Note: Award 0 marks – for an attempt that earns no credit (including copying out the question).
8. Rubric Infringement:
- Candidates may infringe the rubric in one of the following ways:
- only answering one question
 - only describing their directorial vision in question 1
 - only completing their annotation in question 1.
9. The scoris **comments box** is used by your Team Leader to explain the marking of the practice responses. Please refer to these comments when checking your practice responses. **Do not use the comments box for any other reason.**
- If you have any questions or comments for your Team Leader, use the phone, the scoris messaging system, or e-mail.
10. Assistant Examiners will send a brief report on the performance of candidates to their Team Leader (Supervisor) via email by the end of the marking period. The report should contain notes on particular strengths displayed as well as common errors or weaknesses. Constructive criticism of the question paper/mark scheme is also appreciated.
11. For answers marked by levels of response:
- a. **To determine the level** – start at the highest level and work down until you reach the level that matches the answer
 - b. **To determine the mark within the level**, consider the following:

Descriptor	Award mark
On the borderline of this level and the one below	At bottom of level
Just enough achievement on balance for this level	Above bottom and either below middle or at middle of level (depending on number of marks available)
Meets the criteria but with some slight inconsistency	Above middle and either below top of level or at middle of level (depending on number of marks available)
Consistently meets the criteria for this level	At top of level

12. Annotations

Annotation	Meaning

Subject-specific Marking Instructions

INTRODUCTION

Your first task as an Examiner is to become thoroughly familiar with the material on which the examination depends. This material includes:

- the specification, especially the assessment objectives
- the performance text(s) which candidates have studied
- the question paper and its rubrics
- the mark scheme.

You should ensure that you have copies of these materials.

You should ensure also that you are familiar with the administrative procedures related to the marking process. These are set out in the OCR booklet **Instructions for Examiners**. If you are examining for the first time, please read carefully **Appendix 5 Introduction to Script Marking: Notes for New Examiners**.

Please ask for help or guidance whenever you need it. Your first point of contact is your Team Leader.

USING THE MARK SCHEME

Please study this Mark Scheme carefully. The Mark Scheme is an integral part of the process that begins with the setting of the question paper and ends with the awarding of grades. Question papers and Mark Schemes are developed in association with each other so that issues of differentiation and positive achievement can be addressed from the very start.

This Mark Scheme is a working document; it is not exhaustive; it does not provide 'correct' answers. The Mark Scheme can only provide 'best guesses' about how the question will work out, and it is subject to revision after we have looked at a wide range of scripts.

The Examiners' Standardisation Meeting will ensure that the Mark Scheme covers the range of candidates' responses to the questions, and that all Examiners understand and apply the Mark Scheme in the same way. The Mark Scheme will be discussed and amended at the meeting, and administrative procedures will be confirmed. Co-ordination scripts will be issued at the meeting to exemplify aspects of candidates' responses and achievements; the co-ordination scripts then become part of this Mark Scheme.

Before the Standardisation Meeting, you should read and mark in pencil a number of scripts, in order to gain an impression of the range of responses and achievement that may be expected. **In your marking, you will encounter valid responses which are not covered by the Mark Scheme: these responses must be credited.** You will encounter answers which fall outside the 'target range' of levels for the paper which you are marking. Please mark these answers according to the marking criteria.

Please read carefully all the scripts in your allocation and make every effort to look positively for achievement throughout the ability range. Always be prepared to use the full range of marks.

INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR EXAMINERS

- 1 The co-ordination scripts provide you with *examples* of the standard of each band. The marks awarded for these scripts will have been agreed by the Team Leaders and will be discussed fully at the Examiners' Co-ordination Meeting.
- 2 The specific task-related indicative content for each question will help you to understand how the band descriptors may be applied. However, this indicative content does not constitute the mark scheme: it is material that candidates might use, grouped according to each assessment objective tested by the question. It is hoped that candidates will respond to questions in a variety of ways. Rigid demands for 'what must be a good answer' would lead to a distorted assessment. THE INDICATIVE CONTENT FOR EACH TASK provides an indication of what candidates are likely to cover. **The notes are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive:** candidates should be rewarded for any relevant response which appropriately addresses the Assessment Objectives.
- 3 Candidates' answers must be relevant to the question. Beware of prepared answers that do not show the candidate's thought and which have not been adapted to the thrust of the question. Beware also of answers where candidates attempt to reproduce interpretations and concepts that they have been taught but have only partially understood.

Each question is worth **30** marks.

This paper will assess **AO3**: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed and performed.

Level 5: 25–30 marks	<p>Excellent and highly developed references to any theatrical processes or practices, used in the role of director, involved with interpreting and performing theatre.</p> <p>Excellent and highly developed demonstration of how a director’s creative and artistic choices can influence how meaning is communicated to an audience.</p> <p>Excellent and highly developed understanding of how the performance text has been constructed and can be performed.</p> <p>Excellent and highly developed understanding of how the social, cultural, historical context of the performance text can affect how the performance text is interpreted and performed for an audience.</p>
Level 4: 19–24 marks	<p>Confident reference to any theatrical processes or practices, used in the role of director, involved with interpreting and performing theatre.</p> <p>Confident demonstration of how a director’s creative and artistic choices can influence how meaning is communicated to an audience.</p> <p>Confident understanding of how the performance text has been constructed and can be performed.</p> <p>Confident understanding of how the social, cultural, historical context of the performance text can affect how the performance text is interpreted and performed for an audience.</p>

<p>Level 3: 13–18 marks</p>	<p>Clear reference to any theatrical processes or practices, used in the role of director, involved with interpreting and performing theatre.</p> <p>Clear demonstration of how a director’s creative and artistic choices can influence how meaning is communicated to an audience.</p> <p>Clear understanding of how the performance text has been constructed and can be performed.</p> <p>Clear understanding of how the social, cultural, historical context of the performance text can affect how the performance text is interpreted and performed for an audience.</p>
<p>Level 2: 7–12 marks</p>	<p>Basic reference to any theatrical processes or practices, used in the role of director, involved with interpreting and performing theatre.</p> <p>Basic demonstration of how a director’s creative and artistic choices can influence how meaning is communicated to an audience.</p> <p>Basic understanding of how the performance text has been constructed and can be performed.</p> <p>Basic understanding of how the social, cultural, historical context of the performance text can affect how the performance text is interpreted and performed for an audience.</p>
<p>Level 1: 1–6 marks</p>	<p>Limited reference to any theatrical processes or practices, used in the role of director, involved with interpreting and performing theatre.</p> <p>Limited demonstration of how a director’s creative and artistic choices can influence how meaning is communicated to an audience.</p> <p>Limited understanding of how the performance text has been constructed and can be performed.</p> <p>Limited understanding of how the social, cultural, historical context of the performance text can affect how the performance text is interpreted and performed for an audience.</p>
<p>0 marks</p>	<p>No response or no response worthy of any credit.</p>

Question	Answer	Mark	Guidance
1	<p>As a director, describe and justify your vision for directing the actors in this extract to highlight how the actors can use their voices. Annotate the script to show how you would do this.</p> <p>This question asks the candidates to consider.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Their knowledge and understanding of the extract. <input type="checkbox"/> Their role as a director and the methods and techniques they would use in terms of acting, in particular the use of voice. <input type="checkbox"/> How the text has been constructed and how it will be directed to reflect the use of voice of the characters within the extract. <input type="checkbox"/> How directorial methods and techniques are used in order to demonstrate intentions with the use of voice. <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge and understanding of the original performance context and/or the social, cultural and historical context. 	30	<p>Candidates will give a description of their intended ideas on how to direct the use of voice of the characters for the extract, with ideas on how this extract affects the rest of the play.</p> <p>Candidates will explore how they can highlight the importance of use of voice in this extract in the play.</p> <p>Candidates may refer to voice in character related terms to achieve an intention or in relation to use of breath, diaphragm, projection, cadence, pauses etc. Reference to Swale's style of using overlapping dialogue combined with text interspersed with song may well be referred to by candidates.</p> <p>Candidates may reflect on the comedic quality to vocal delivery, the changes in vocal focus to reflect character intention and the effect the period has upon the vocal journey of a character.</p> <p>Good answers may cover vocal attributes such as pitch, pace and pause and other delivery methods such as use of breath, repetition, stutters, accents and use of punctuation in order to bring out the meaning of the text.</p> <p>Good answers will explore a full range of directing skills in order to convey significance including staging, character relationships, objectives and actions, movement and interaction in relation to the use of voice.</p>

Question	Answer	Mark	Guidance
			<p>Candidates will annotate the script to highlight the contrast in voice of the scene and how they would use different techniques to highlight this to the audience.</p> <p>There are sections in the extract that a candidate can highlight specific moments where, as directors, they would explore the character's relationships and subtext in relation to the use voice.</p> <p>Reference could be made to different techniques or directors /practitioners to show how they would bring out the use of voice of the scene.</p> <p>This indicative content is intended to indicate aspects of questions that may feature in candidates' answers. It is not prescriptive, nor is it exclusive; examiners must be careful to reward original but well-focused answers and implicit as well as explicit responses to questions.</p> <p>This guidance should be used in conjunction with the Level Descriptors.</p>

Question	Answer	Mark	Guidance
2	<p>As a director, explain and justify how you could stage a performance of <i>Nell Gwynn</i> to fully integrate technology.</p> <p>This question asks the candidates to consider.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> An understanding of the role of director in the relation to the use of technology. Technology can cover the following aspects: lighting, sound, audio-visual technologies and set mechanics and machinery. <input type="checkbox"/> The structure of the play and how it is constructed and how technology may support or enhance this. <input type="checkbox"/> The director's vision for the staging design and its potential impact. <input type="checkbox"/> The creative and artistic choices which the director will need to make. <input type="checkbox"/> The staging techniques used by the director and how they are integrated into the performance alongside use of technology. <input type="checkbox"/> The performance text and how it could be staged in a production to utilise technology choices made. 	30	<p>The use of the multimedia and filming techniques may be explored by higher band candidates in relation to the use of technology.</p> <p>References to the social, cultural and historic elements of the play and how they determine technological choices made.</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of contemporary / classic rehearsal techniques and staging should be credited and candidates might explore these in relation to the staging of a contemporary production within a classic period.</p> <p>Candidates are to be rewarded for original concepts based on staging, use of technology within the <i>mise-en-scène</i>. Challenging the theatrical norm to experiment with ideas should also be rewarded.</p> <p>Good answers will highlight how specific rehearsal, and directorial techniques have been used to stage the performance in tandem with integrated design elements.</p> <p>Staging that reflects the period while contemporising or modernising may well be used by candidates with design elements being manipulated to drive the comedy of the play.</p>

Question	Answer	Mark	Guidance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ What the stage space will be and where the audience is. <li>□ The creative and artistic choices which the director will need to make - how as directors they would use all the tools at their disposal etc. <li>□ The playwright's intentions and original performance context including the social, cultural and historical context of the play and how this may feed into directorial technology choices. 		<p>Good answers will highlight specific scenes in detail to help explain their staging of the performance text to integrate technology.</p> <p>This indicative content is intended to indicate aspects of questions that may feature in candidates' answers. It is not prescriptive, nor is it exclusive; examiners must be careful to reward original but well-focused answers and implicit as well as explicit responses to questions.</p> <p>This guidance should be used in conjunction with the Level Descriptors.</p>

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