

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

H459/50

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

H459/50 Deconstructing Texts for Performance

Lovesong

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 ONE

Night.

A house, surrounded by an overgrown garden.

BILLY stands on a porch, smoking a cigarette.

BILLY: When I clean my teeth, I always clean 5
them twice. This takes time. I use a little brush.
I work between every molar, like a tiny chimney
sweep. Because it is important. Because
decalcification removes the enamel and yields 10
decay. Because our teeth are our legacy, after
bones and muscles have dissolved into dust
and the earth, our teeth remain. Their value to
archaeologist and paleontologist is infinite and
undeniable. They reveal what we eat and how
we live. I see it as my duty to preserve them. 15

A light goes off somewhere in the house.

Then I turn off the light and go to my bed. I
read.

I wind my clock. I say no prayers.

A light goes on in a bedroom window. 20

I sleep.

And in my sleep...

BILLY flicks out his cigarette –

In my sleep...

A front door suddenly illuminated by WILLIAM 25
holding a standard lamp.

I am young again.

MARGARET stands under a tree in the garden.
She holds a kitchen chair and a tin bucket.

WILLIAM nods, heads inside. WILLIAM 30
ascends the stairs, just visible through the hall
window, holding the standard lamp. In the
bedroom window, BILLY appears just turning
on the same standard lamp. He readies
himself for bed. He crosses to a bathroom 35
window, turning on the light. He is visible
brushing his teeth.

MARGARET: (*Calling out.*) Does the kitchen
look smaller to you?

BILLY brushes his teeth. He spits out. Checks 40
his teeth in the mirror. Turns off the light.

WILLIAM: No.

WILLIAM now stands in the bedroom window,
by the now lit standard lamp.

MARGARET: Come down. 45

WILLIAM nods, exits downstairs. MARGARET stands in the kitchen below. She puts the chair down by a kitchen table, a bucket by the sink.

See. I counted twelve paces and now there are only ten. 50

WILLIAM: It's shrunk.

MARGARET: It's shrunk.

BILLY just visible in the bedroom window above. He stands winding up his clock. He turns off the light. 55

WILLIAM: Does that mean our repayments will be smaller?

MARGARET smiles, explores the sink. WILLIAM slips his arm around her waist; they peer out of the kitchen window. 60

The garden's still the same.

MARGARET: Yes.

WILLIAM: Want to pace it out?

MARGARET: It has a tree.

WILLIAM: It has a tree. 65

MARGARET: And grass.

WILLIAM: That is definitely grass.

MARGARET: Tall grass.

WILLIAM: I'll mow it tomorrow.

They look at one another, smile. They lean in to kiss – 70

WILLIAM: Is that a peach tree?

WILLIAM exits. MARGARET watches him.

(Calling out.) Come outside. They're ready.

MARGARET follows WILLIAM out. They stand picking peaches and laughing, putting them into a tin bucket in MARGARET's hand. 75

MARGARET: We have peaches.

She holds a peach up to him. He bites into its juicy flesh licking the juice as it drips down her wrist. They laugh, kissing one another, drawing one another into a laughing embrace until – 80

WILLIAM: What do you think they are?

Suddenly a sudden surge of birdsong, 85

MARGARET and WILLIAM look up, eyes training across the sky.

MARGARET: Starlings.

Blackout.

SCENE TWO	90
<i>Day.</i>	
<i>BILLY stands in the kitchen doorway, holding a dead starling.</i>	
BILLY: The cat must have got it.	
<i>MAGGIE crosses the kitchen, pouring BILLY a cup of coffee. He goes to take the coffee. She tuts.</i>	95
MAGGIE: Wash your hands.	
<i>BILLY nods, he carefully lays the starling on the table.</i>	100
Don't leave it there.	
<i>BILLY washes his hands at the kitchen sink.</i>	
BILLY: I'll bin it.	
MAGGIE: No. She'll get it again. You need to bury it.	105
<i>BILLY hesitates, nods. MAGGIE picks up her coffee heading up.</i>	
BILLY: What time is your appointment today?	
MAGGIE: It's fine. I can still drive myself.	
BILLY: What time?	110
MAGGIE: Ten forty.	
<i>BILLY nods.</i>	
BILLY: I'll drive you.	
MAGGIE: It's fine.	
<i>MAGGIE exits, heads upstairs. BILLY goes over to the table and pours himself a cup of coffee. He stands, drinks his coffee, staring out at the garden ahead.</i>	115
BILLY: (<i>Calling out.</i>) We need to pick the peaches.	120
<i>MAGGIE stops midway through creaming her face in the bathroom above.</i>	
They're going soft.	
<i>BILLY waits, the silence hanging until –</i>	
Wasps are getting them.	125
<i>BILLY picks up the starling, heads out into the garden, picking up a trowel on his way out. MAGGIE looks out of the window, watching him. She finishes up in the bathroom, and crosses over into the bedroom. She opens a closet door, enters –</i>	130
MARGARET: I have nothing to wear.	

MARGARET comes out of the closet, holding two dresses on different hangers.

In this I look like my mother. And in this I look like a tramp. 135

WILLIAM lounges on the bed, reading a newspaper. She holds up the dresses to herself, considering.

Mother... Tramp... Mother... Tramp... Mother. 140

WILLIAM: Tramp... Tramp... Tramp.

MARGARET discards one dress, considering the other.

MARGARET: Mother.

MARGARET pulls on her dress, WILLIAM zips up the back of her dress. She sniffs. 145

WILLIAM: What?

MARGARET smiles, shakes her head –

MARGARET: How do I look?

WILLIAM: Beautiful. (*Beat.*) Your mother always looked like a tramp. 150

WILLIAM sinks back on the bed, resumes reading his book.

MARGARET: What are you reading?

WILLIAM holds it up for her to show her the cover, then he resumes reading. 155

MARGARET watches him.

WILLIAM: What?

MARGARET smiles, exits into the closet.

MAGGIE exits from the closet, now dressed. 160

BILLY: You ready?

MAGGIE looks at BILLY standing in the bedroom doorway.

MAGGIE: I said I could drive myself.

BILLY: What else have I got to do today? 165

MAGGIE nods, concedes, looks back at the bed, WILLIAM now gone.

Do you need to take anything with you?

MAGGIE: No. Not today.

BILLY nods. 170

I'm just picking up my prescription. *BILLY hesitates –*

BILLY: I'll drop you and then wait outside the pharmacy.

MAGGIE nods, exits. 175

And after –

BILLY looks up, sees MARGARET smiling at him, coming out from the closet, fixing an earring.

MARGARET: What? 180

MAGGIE stands on the stairs.

MARGARET: Have you seen the blue heels?

BILLY shakes his head.

I can't find them anywhere.

MARGARET smiles, heading back into the closet. 185

MAGGIE: (Calling up.) Billy – ?

BILLY stands alone in the bedroom.

BILLY: I'm coming. I'm coming. I'm there.

Blackout. 190

EXTRA ANSWER SPACE

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

The form consists of a large rectangular area with horizontal dotted lines for writing. A solid vertical line runs down the left side of this area, creating a narrow margin for writing question numbers. The dotted lines are spaced evenly across the page.



CAMBRIDGE OCR

A Level Drama and Theatre

H459/50 Deconstructing texts for performance: Lovesong

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.

<p>Level 5: 25–30 marks</p>	<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>
<p>Level 4: 19–24 marks</p>	<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 within the context of the play. <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.</p> <p>Reference to Morgan's contemporary language style, the effect dialogue rich in subtextual quality has on voice and the character contrast in vocal delivery.</p> <p>Candidates may reflect on how the rhythm and tempo of text delivery varies during the extract in particular between characters of contrasting ages and emotional states.</p> <p>Changes in vocal quality stemming from physical aspects of performance may be analysed by candidates with voice used in juxtaposition to physical elements.</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>

Question	Answer	Mark	Guidance
			<p>Vocal quality reflecting deeper intentions and objectives that trigger and combined with movement choices made may be referenced.</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> <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>Lovesong</i> to fully integrate technology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> This question asks the candidates to consider. <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 (AO3)	<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>Responses may include simultaneous filming of the couples in relation to the main action of the play, creative use of the stage space combined with experimental sound and lighting choices specific to the context of the play.</p> <p>References to the social, cultural and historic elements of the play and how they determine technological choices made.</p> <p>References to Frantic style physical theatre combined with use of technology to enhance the narrative arc and reflect character intentions and emotional states are to be rewarded.</p> <p>Elements of Frantic Assembly's work from across their portfolio may be referenced and used within the technological elements, for example a Frantic style soundtrack interspersed with highly stylised elements and truthful emotional performances.</p> <p>Innovative staging concepts and ideas may be referenced to subtly identify the time shifts within the performance.</p>

Question	Answer	Mark	Guidance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="454 288 1122 352">□ What the stage space will be and where the audience is. <li data-bbox="454 400 1122 544">□ 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 data-bbox="454 592 1122 767">□ 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 data-bbox="1346 288 2085 392">A reflection on experimental staging choices combined with physical total theatre elements may well be reflected upon by candidates.</p> <p data-bbox="1346 432 2085 576">Knowledge and understanding of contemporary rehearsal techniques and staging should be credited and candidates might explore these in relation to the staging of a contemporary production.</p> <p data-bbox="1346 616 2085 759">Candidates are to be rewarded for original concepts based on staging, use of technology within the mise en scene. Challenging the theatrical norm to experiment with ideas should also be rewarded.</p> <p data-bbox="1346 799 2085 943">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 data-bbox="1346 983 2085 1094">Good answers will highlight specific scenes in detail to help explain their staging of the performance text to integrate technology.</p> <p data-bbox="1346 1134 2085 1350">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 data-bbox="1346 1358 2085 1422">This guidance should be used in conjunction with the Level Descriptors.</p>

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