

GCSE (9–1)
Candidate Style Answers

DRAMA

J316
For first teaching in 2016

Section A: Death of a Salesman – exemplar 2 with commentary

Version 2



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INTRODUCTION

This resource has been produced by senior members of the GCSE 9-1 Drama examining team to offer teachers an insight into how the assessment objectives are applied.

Please note that as these responses have not been through full moderation, 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 GCSE 9-1 Drama web page: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-drama-j316-from-2016/>

QUESTION 1

- 1 Select **one** line from the list below. Explain how it has an impact on this character in the performance text you have studied.

Blood Brothers

‘Edward: Well, my mummy doesn’t allow me to play down here actually’

Death of a Salesman

‘Happy: See, Biff, everybody around me is so false that I’m constantly lowering my ideals...’

Find Me

‘Jean: Other mothers cope. I feel so inadequate’

Gizmo

‘Rust: I’m walking away now. I suggest you do the same, eh’

Kindertransport

‘Evelyn: You’ve made a commitment to moving into that place. Stick by it’

Missing Dan Nolan

‘Pauline: ...I just delegated it... Ask your father’

Misterman

‘Thomas: It all began from a Nothing. This loud crashing all began as a whisper...’

[4]

SAMPLE ANSWER

Biff thinks that he is better than everyone else including his brother because his dad has made him think that. He doesn't realise that in fact he is living a lie, living falsely. Biff has a rude awakening when he realises at the end.

COMMENTARY

The candidate scored one out of a possible four marks. The candidate has responded in relation to Biff, rather than Happy as the question requires, and offers a limited response. However, one mark has been awarded as the answer does offer some potential impact and there is an attempt at linking to specific moments from the text.

To gain additional marks, the candidate needs to offer a greater understanding of the character and give clearer potential impacts on them, such as the relevance of the American Dream or Happy's attitude towards his life chances.

QUESTION 2

- 2 Select **one** stage design from the photographs below. Justify why this could be suitable for a production of the performance text you have studied.

[4]

SAMPLE ANSWER

I would choose set design 2 because the split levels allows for the Bernard and Stanley to be up high and look down on the Loman family. It also has a staircase that means the Loman's can use that to show they are going upstairs to bed.

COMMENTARY

The candidate scored one out of a possible four marks. A limited response with limited reasons for choice of Set. There is some attempt at discussing the suitability for the style of performance although the reasons, examples and justification to back up the choice are weak throughout.

To gain additional marks, the candidate needs to clearly identify areas of suitability for this Set as well as justifying, with reference to specific moments from the text, why this style of Set is appropriate.

QUESTION 3

3 Select the character from the performance text you have studied:

<i>Blood Brothers</i>	Mrs Lyons	<i>Death of a Salesman</i>	Linda
<i>Find Me</i>	Jean	<i>Gizmo</i>	Bernice
<i>Kindertransport</i>	Faith	<i>Missing Dan Nolan</i>	Greg
<i>Misterman</i>	Mrs Cleary		

Complete the table below by listing **three** ways in which an actor could use their voice to portray this character. Justify your choices with examples from the performance text you have studied.

[6]

SAMPLE ANSWER

Use of Voice	Justification
Quiet, low volume	Because she is always so patient with Willy and never shouts.
Fear	At the end of the play Linda is really fearful for where Willy has gone and what he is doing.
Tremble	Because she is so sad during his funeral she is overcome with sadness and this is shown when she speaks.

COMMENTARY

The candidate scored four out of a possible six marks. A sound response. The candidate offers clear examples of the uses of voice, although the use of the correct terminology has sometimes not been applied, 'tremble' rather than 'sad' or 'emotional'. Their justification gives some clarification.

To gain additional marks, the candidate needs to clearly use the correct terminology for uses of voice as well as offering explicit justification for each use, further demonstrated with relevant examples from the text.

QUESTION 4

- 4 Explain, using examples from the performance text you have studied, how stage directions can be used to support the actors in communicating their role to the audience.

[6]

SAMPLE ANSWER

You wouldn't be able to perform Death of a Salesman without reading all of the stage directions because they give the actors all the information that the writer wants them to know to be able to perform. Within the stage directions they also give information about the lighting and sound which helps to set the scene for the actors. There are instructions given to the actors e.g. "combing his hair" which tells the actor more about his character and for example that he cares about what his looks like which you need to know to interpret him rightly.

COMMENTARY

The candidate scored three out of a possible six marks. The candidate's understanding of stage directions is sound and they do explain the relevance of stage directions in relation to the text. There is also some sound description as to how the actor may use them with some limited reasoning for why stage directions are written. It is the lack of connection to the performance text and the communication of the role to the audience which limits this response.

To gain additional marks, the candidate needs to demonstrate a greater understanding of how stage directions can also impact on the audience. This needs to be justified with specific examples from the text. The candidate could also respond to stage directions in relation to designers and technicians as well as actors. Candidates could in addition offer examples from their practical work to explain and/or justify how stage directions could impact on an audience, again referring to specific moments from the text.

QUESTION 5

- 5 Compare the advantages and disadvantages for an actor when presenting the performance text you have studied 'in the round'.

[6]

SAMPLE ANSWER

The disadvantages are that the actors will have their back and face to the audience all the time so they can't see. They can't see your facial expressions to understand the story either. The advantage is that they can see everything as there is no backstage. This play should be believable apart from when Willy is having his memories so having it in the round works for the believable parts but for the dream sequence this might not work.

COMMENTARY

The candidate scored two out of a possible six marks. A basic response. The candidate has given an example of an advantage and disadvantage of performing 'in the round', with some comparison in relation to specific moments from the text. The evidence they offer to demonstrate their choices are highly limited.

To gain additional marks, the candidate needs to demonstrate a range of responses to advantages and disadvantages of performing 'in the round', with specific and clearly relevant examples from the text. They should also discuss the advantages of staging 'in the round', with further evidence to explain their reasoning. For example: stronger actor audience relationship, more naturalistic lighting needed: stage can be the same level as the audience, several entrances and exits for the director/actors. They should then compare/contrast these advantages with the disadvantages. For example: difficult to block as you can't define stage areas as easily, there are no wings as such, lighting is difficult as it all comes from the top, the intensity of the actor audience relationship can be hard for actors.

QUESTION 6

- 6 Discuss how a director could stage the opening of the performance text you have studied to engage the audience from the start. You may refer to the direction of the performers and/or design of the scene in your answer.

[8]

SAMPLE ANSWER

The audience would come in to a dark stage and just the sound of the flute playing. There would be no curtain and the audience would be sat as though they are in the dining room of the Ioman house and part of the family. The set would be minimal and the actors would physically create the main elements through physical theatre, having an actor represent the fridge and having a narrator read out the stage directions and blocking so that the audience don't get bored through all the setting of the scene information.

COMMENTARY

The candidate scored two out of a possible eight marks. Applying a Physical Theatre approach towards this text is an interesting concept and the ideas the candidate discusses do have the potential to engage the audience. However, there is only a very limited reference to examples from the text to justify their ideas and this ultimately restricts the overall potential of what the candidate offers.

This question requires the candidate to demonstrate an understanding of the role of the director from a variety of perspectives, giving consideration to the actors and/or designers in detail, by discussing all the directorial decisions made. This ultimately needs to be referenced back to the impact this has on the audience.

To gain additional marks, the candidate needs to reveal a clearer understanding of the potential impact, and give greater consideration to all the directorial and designers decisions they make within this opening sequence. This must be demonstrated with explicit examples from the text to justify the decisions made and demonstrate clear understanding of how each can work to engage the audience. Candidates could also discuss how semiotics, proxemics and how the director may direct the actors to use physical and/or vocal techniques to achieve their overall aims.

QUESTION 7

- 7 Describe **one** suitable costume for a character from the performance text you have studied. Justify why your choices are appropriate.

In your answer, name the character from the performance text you have studied. You may include a sketch of your design with annotations in your answer.

[8]

SAMPLE ANSWER



Biff Loman is very interested in Sport and it is the only thing he is good at even though he doesn't have the best sports attitude. So I would have Biff in a American soccer top with the number 1 on it as he is seen as no 1 child in Willy's eyes. His hair would be scruffy as he is always dashing out of the house to play ball in the yard, his hair would be a bit grubby too as he is always diving around playing football.

COMMENTARY

The candidate scored three out of a possible eight marks. A basic response. The candidate's design for the character is potentially valid for some moments within the text and they have decided on an appropriate choice of garment in relation to the time period and style of the play. The limited reference to specific moments from the text and giving very limited reasoning to justify their choices limits the overall potential mark.

To gain additional marks, the candidate needs to demonstrate a costume design that is fully considered in relation to the knowledge and understanding they have developed about the character from the text. They could have discussed and developed a detailed concept of the costume for the character of Biff which clearly described the garments colours and overall design impact in relation to the genre, style and content of the play. All costume suggestions need to be made with clear justification, with examples, as to why the designs are suitable for the character. Candidates should consider the visual communication of the characters costume within the play as a whole along with the potential impact this could have on the audience.

QUESTION 8

- 8 Explain, using two examples, how the social and/or historical context can be seen in the performance text you have studied.

[8]

SAMPLE ANSWER

Willy Loman believes in the American dream which means that everyone no matter what their background is able to do well, you work hard and you will succeed. this isn't true for Willy or his family as they all work hard but don't get very far. Socially this is unfair, this is a social divide. Linda is treated as a typical woman and just stays at home which is what happened in those days but nowadays she would work, she is cleverer than we are made to think she is. She is very good at maths and she should do something with those skills.

COMMENTARY

The candidate scored three out of a possible eight marks. A basic response. The candidate offers two sound examples in relation to the social and historical context of the text and adds some personal commentary to explain their choices. However, there is only little reference to the text to justify this, which restricts the overall mark potential.

To gain additional marks, the candidate needs to select and clearly explain how two examples of key social and/or historical issues are used/discussed within the play, backed up with strong reference to key moments/scenes also. Candidates should discuss how their chosen two examples are explored and developed in the text and the potential impact they have on character, situation and ultimately the audience within these key aspects of the text. An accomplished response to this question requires the candidate to clearly highlight how their two chosen issues are discussed at different stages throughout the text. This should then be justified with an acknowledgement of how some aspects could be performed to exemplify the outcomes of their chosen issues.



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