Qualification Accredited

OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

A LEVEL
Candidate Style Answers

DRAMA AND THEATRE

H459/31
For first teaching in 2016

Q7 Level 1 – sample answer with commentary: The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time

Version 1

www.ocr.org.uk/drama

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 this answer and commentary can be found on the A Level Drama and Theatre web page here: http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/242806-unit-h459-31-analysing-characters-for-performance-sample-assessment-material.pdf

© OCR 2017

SECTION B QUESTION 7

Analyse a live performance you have seen, outlining the director's interpretation and how effective you think it was. At the start of your answer state the name, venue and date (month and year) of the live performance you have seen. **[30]**

SAMPLE ANSWER

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time
Gielgud Theatre, London, June 2016

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time was published in 2003 as a novel aimed at both adults and young adults. It sold over one million copies. The stage adaptation of the novel was then created in 2012 at the National Theatre. This stage version has since won many awards and has been transferred to different theatres and even enjoyed a tour in both the UK and America.

Firstly, it is important to consider the director's interpretations of the main roles of the play.

For the role of Ed Boone (Christopher's father who he lives with), the director clearly wanted to demonstrate a tense relationship between father and son. The actor playing Ed constantly acted frustrated and irritated by his son and yet it was done so well that the audience managed to finally see that it was not his son he is angry at but is actually angry at himself. He's not supposed to be an unkind man and the director seemed to agree with this interpretation. Some might view the role of Ed as a bit of a villain because he did lie to Christopher about his mother's death. However, the director does not seem to have interpreted him in such a negative way. In this production, it does become clear that he strives to take care of Christopher even though he doesn't always do a good job, but he does him ask him questions which shows he cares, such as what he wants for dinner. The audience did seem to like the role of Ed Boone and sympathise with him.

For the role of Siobhan, Christopher's special educational needs teacher, the director clearly wanted to show how important this role is to the boy. She tells much of the story and even starts off as a narrator. She speaks Christopher's inner thoughts aloud and allows the audience to get into the fifteen year old's mind. For this reason, Siobhan stayed on stage for most of the time.

For the main role in the play, Christopher Boone, the director's interpretation was the same as the novel in that the fifteen year old Christopher's defining characteristic is his inability to imagine the thoughts and feelings of other people. In other words, he cannot empathise. Because he cannot imagine what another person is thinking, he cannot tell when a person speaks sarcastically, or determine a person's mood by their facial expressions. This inability to empathise is one of the most prominent features of autism-related disorders, and this characteristic as well as a few others - Christopher's difficulty understanding metaphors, his fixation on certain topics, and his computer-like ability with numbers - strongly suggest that Christopher has a mild form of autism (although this is not confirmed in the play). This condition has made him extraordinarily gifted in maths and science but severely under-equipped socially, leading Christopher to frequently misunderstand other people, especially his father. As a result, he greatly dislikes social interaction and avoids it when possible. The director clearly wanted to follow this interpretation of the role through his various interactions and awkward conversations with people such as his neighbour. We could sense Christopher's awkwardness through some great acting methods.

It was clear when watching this play that the director had worked with an autism consultant. The director had worked with a person who is a trainer for teachers working with autistic children. This could be why the representation of Christopher's autism was so effective on stage and why it had been interpreted in such a realistic manner through aspects such as gestures and facial expressions.

© OCR 2017

Next, it is important to consider stage design. The National Theatre's production of the play was originally performed in the round. In this stage version, the set design was altered because it had been transferred to a theatre with a proscenium arch space. This is a very different space because the audience no longer surround the action and instead there is a back wall and wing space. However, the new theatre space did not alter the play in any way and it was still as effective.

Finally, I will consider an effective or memorable moment in the play. This moment was right at the end of the play, after the curtain call. Whilst most people would usually think that there was nothing left to see, this was not the case. The actor playing Christopher came back onto the stage and started to explain how he solved a difficult A Level Maths question. This was an effective moment because we realised that despite his autism, Christopher is an exceptionally bright and intelligent student and by ending the play with this, he is able to prove his ability to everyone. It was a happy and effective moment and one which made us like the main character even more and wish the play could have gone on for longer.

Level 1

Commentary

The candidate has not responded effectively to the question which is about the production and how it was put onstage. The essay re-tells the story, discusses the characters and analyses autism. There is knowledge of roles and relationships and some evaluation of the end scene but there is very limited reference beyond the proscenium arch as to how the piece was staged and whether or not this was effective. There is no evaluation of the live performance making reference to dramatic techniques or conventions and there is minimal use of theatrical vocabulary. Information provided has relevance but there is a lack of critical analysis.

Improvements

Improvements need to focus on identification of specific techniques and conventions used to convey meaning and critical analysis of those ideas.

© OCR 2017

The small print

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

LLOYD'S REGISTER · LRQA
ISO 9001
UKAS MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS
001