

**GCSE (9-1)**

**Examiners' report**

# **DRAMA**

**J316**

For first teaching in 2016

**J316/04 Summer 2022 series**

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## Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers are also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

### Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

To support student revision, advance information was published about the focus of exams for Summer 2022 assessments. Advance information was available for most GCSE, AS and A Level subjects, Core Maths, FSMQ, and Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies. You can find more information on our [website](#).

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## Paper 4 series overview

After 2 years, it was good to see candidates producing such commendable work again. The overall quality of candidate responses this year was generally strong, and the mark average was higher than in all other seasons. This is a huge testament to the work completed in centres in what have been very 'trying' times. It was very evident that most centres had thoroughly prepared candidates for this for exam and centres and candidates are again to be congratulated.

Examiners in general, commented very favourably on the quality of the work presented for examination in all 9 questions and it was evident that most candidates were well informed and often highly detailed in their responses. Centres had used the pre-released guidance well to plan and prepare and this resulted in an increase in the quality of responses offered by candidates. Many questions responses reflected a depth of knowledge and understanding and it was clear that centres had engaged in much excellent practical preparation and exploratory work. This had ultimately allowed candidates to explore and develop a very sound base of knowledge and understanding of their chosen text and it was clearly evident from the majority of candidates responses, that they knew their texts very well indeed.

It was also pleasing again that all seven set texts had once again been utilised by centres. 'Blood Brothers' was overwhelmingly the most popular choice of texts used, although there was an increase in the use of the other six texts. It was also noted that, as has happened with the practical exam - J316-03, some centres were choosing to use several texts within their groups and offering candidates a choice of text to explore. This was reflected in the wide range of responses to the paper. In general, many candidates had performed effectively and there were far more candidates who performed well this year and fewer candidates who scored very low marks. It was pleasing to see how knowledgeable some candidates were in using specialist terminology and examiners reported how encouraged they were with the way centres had prepared candidates to be able to meet the variety of requirements in this paper. It was also noted many times by all examiners that most candidates had coped well with the requirements of this examination and were very well prepared for all aspects of the paper. Again, this is especially pleasing in light of the huge 'difficulties' this cohort has faced.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical explored the text to aid knowledge and understanding</li> <li>• read the question carefully and underlined the key words</li> <li>• used the keywords from exam questions to make sure question focus</li> <li>• understood and used theatrical terms and concepts appropriate to the text</li> <li>• had prepared well</li> <li>• did not over answer questions and run out of time</li> <li>• linked answer back to the impact on the audience</li> <li>• showed a good understanding of the play</li> <li>• had a clear understanding of how an actor communicates to the audience</li> <li>• gave precise ideas, supported by justification linked to the texts themes, ideas and characters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relied on 'seen' live performances of the text within responses</li> <li>• not answered the question rather repeated a previous years' response</li> <li>• missed the relevance of keywords and responded to a different aspect</li> <li>• had little understanding of the difference between description and analysis</li> <li>• missed out questions</li> <li>• used a lot of description about the situation but did not answer the question</li> <li>• gave a pre-planned answer rather than answering the question</li> <li>• offered vague descriptions when trying to support opinions on the live theatre review</li> <li>• lacked explicit detail in their work</li> <li>• were sometimes unsure as to which text should be applied in each section</li> </ul>

## Section A overview

This section of the examination requires candidates to study and explore one chosen text from a list of seven identified within the specification. There are 8 questions, each requiring a different response to a variety of skills needed to explore, develop and perform their chosen text. Candidates need to develop a good knowledge of the whole of the play from a director, Actor and Designer perspective with understanding informed by the original intentions of the playwright; the context of when it was written in relation to the social, cultural and political context; the creative challenges of the text for the director, Actor and Designers and how they could be met; the impact of the text on an audience and the potential responses to key moments; the role and impact of characters within the piece; the use of semiotics, signs and signals; how characterisation can be explored, developed and presented in performance.

It was evident that centres had fully prepared candidates for all potential areas of study in this section and encouraged candidates to be concise with their responses to early questions. There was a focus on design aspects this year and it was pleasing that many candidates had clearly explored and engaged with this within centres and they demonstrated a clear understanding of the requirements of design, which had been clearly explored practically in lessons and were often linked to the wider contexts of their chosen texts. Candidates were generally good at offering a level of detail required to meet the requirements of each question and answers were often precise, well constructed and informative. Examiners again reported on how well candidates had developed their understanding in most areas of their chosen text, and how the candidate responses within the exam were often well informed and creative, with many candidates often successfully giving full and developed answers to most questions. Many candidates demonstrated a clear understanding and justified/explained their responses in this section.

## Question 1

*Blood Brothers* – Willy Russell  
*Death of a Salesman* – Arthur Miller  
*Find Me* – Olwen Wymark  
*Gizmo* – Alan Ayckbourn  
*Kindertransport* – Diane Samuels  
*Missing Dan Nolan* – Mark Wheeler  
*Misterman* – Enda Walsh

State the performance text you have studied .....

- 1 From the list below, select the character and their first line from the performance text you have studied.

Identify **two physical movements** the character could use when saying this line.

Explain how each movement communicates meaning.

<i>Blood Brothers</i> : Mrs Johnstone	'Tell me it's not true. Say it's just a story.'
<i>Death of a Salesman</i> : Willy	'It's all right. I came back.'
<i>Find Me</i> : Edward 1	'All right, Verity, move out of the way now. I want to take some pictures...'
<i>Gizmo</i> : Manny Rice	'What's your name, boy? I know you, don't I? Rusty, isn't it?'
<i>Kindertransport</i> : Helga	'An abyss is a deep and terrible chasm.'
<i>Missing Dan Nolan</i> : Greg	'Many people believe our Dan went straight in... but that's not the only possibility...'
<i>Misterman</i> : Thomas	'Hello, everyone!'

Name of character .....

Physical movement

.....

How it communicates meaning

.....

.....

.....

Physical movement

.....

How it communicates meaning

.....

.....

.....

[4]

This question was answered well by the vast majority of candidates. Candidates accurately identified two appropriate physical movements as well as clearly explaining how and why this was effective in creating meaning in performance. Only a few candidates did not respond to this question.

**What did candidates do well?**

Examiners reported many candidates structured their response in good detail, the most successful addressing the question in a way which allowed them to clearly state the physical movement and then justifying how this created a meaning. It was noted by examiners that most candidates were concise in their detail on this question for the marks available.

**What did candidates find a challenge?**

Only a few candidates did not use the required candidate from the question list. Some candidates did not address what was asked for by the question and did not offer a physical movement. Reading the question should be impressed on all candidates by centres. In many responses throughout the paper, candidates of all levels often responded well in what they wanted to say about the moment or technique, but did not respond appropriately to the question. Also, some less successful responses did not suggest any aspect which could be construed as a physical movement and also focused on vocal skills.

## Exemplar 1

By projecting his voice at a low pitch and volume and emphasize it on the line "move out of the way now"  
 How it communicates meaning

To establish some sort of authority to show his annoyance towards Venly and show he is now fed up with her.

The response shows clearly how a higher responding candidate has not read and responded appropriately to the question.



## Question 2

2 Using the same character from Question 1, suggest **two appropriate items of costume** for this character.

Explain why this item of costume is appropriate for the character.

Item 1

.....

Explanation

.....  
.....  
.....

Item 2

.....

Explanation

.....  
.....  
.....

[4]

This question was answered well by most candidates. Most Candidates clearly identified two specific items of costume and then explained why each was suitable for the character to enhance/show meaning. Some candidates offered an understanding of the potential impact their chosen costume could have on the character also.

### What did candidates do well?

Most candidates structured their response in good detail, the most successful addressing the question in a way which allowed them to clearly state their chosen costume and then describing why it was appropriate. The best responses were often where candidates were concise in their choice of costume and clearly justified how or why this was appropriate. Candidates who had not used the character listed in question 1, and had used a different one, were positively rewarded with this question if they did use the same character from Question 1, albeit not the one listed.

### What did candidates find a challenge?

Any aspect that could be construed as costume was acceptable. However, some candidates described items that were clearly props or set. No credit could be given here. Also, some stated the costume they would use but did not state how it was appropriate, again missing out on potential marks.

### Question 3

3 You are performing the performance text you have studied on a **thrust stage**.

Explain **three** advantages and/or disadvantages of performing on this style of stage.

Give examples from your performance text to justify your response.

Advantage/Disadvantage 1 .....

.....  
.....  
.....

Advantage/Disadvantage 2 .....

.....  
.....  
.....

Advantage/Disadvantage 3 .....

.....  
.....  
.....

[6]

It was evident that centres had explored a variety of performance staging styles and candidates were fully aware of what each was and how it could be used. Hence, this question was answered well by most candidates. Most candidates clearly understood the specifics of a thrust stage and were able to offer some very sound practical examples of how this may affect the performance. It was evident that many candidates had accessed the advanced information and had a confident understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of thrust staging. More successful candidates were able to directly link their explanations to the impact of key moments in the play and some referenced the playwright's original intentions within this.

**What did candidates do well?**

Most candidates were concise in their responses, listing advantages/disadvantages clearly and how they would communicate meaning, in a precise manner. From some candidates, there were some overly full

answers, often offering more depth than the marks available. The most successful responses were often where candidates had clearly explored using a thrust stage in a practical way and could successfully demonstrate the elements they had explored to develop the response. Positive reward was given to responses in relation to examples from the performance text which were implied examples. For example, 'Actors are closer to the audience . By seeing their faces more clearly enhances the sense of emotion and impacts on the audience more in an emotional way in key moments.'

**What did candidates find a challenge?**

This question was problematic for candidates who did not read the question carefully. The question required a response in relation to a thrust stage. There were some responses which focused on how the performance is 'usually' performed; In the Round; On a Proscenium Arch stage. No credit could be given here unless there was a reference to thrust staging. In some responses that were quite general, it was unclear as to whether the candidate was discussing thrust staging at all, as the presentation of writing appeared generic, resulting in confusion as to whether the candidate actually knew what this staging format was.

### Question 4

4 Choose a dramatic moment from the performance text you have studied.

As a lighting designer, describe **three lighting effects** you could use to create **mood and atmosphere**.

Explain how the lighting creates mood and atmosphere.

Dramatic moment .....

Lighting effect	How the lighting creates mood and atmosphere
1.	
2.	
3.	

[6]

This question was answered with consistency and was one of the best responses from candidates within the paper. Nearly all candidates displayed good knowledge and understanding of lighting and how it could be used to create mood and atmosphere. Candidates clearly identified lighting choices and were able to offer very practical ways of how they would create mood in performance, often with very sound justification also. Candidates who were most successful ensured the mood and atmosphere being evoked was distinct.

**What did candidates do well?**

Many candidates offered clear examples of potential lighting effects which were highly specific to the chosen moment and were able to clearly discuss how they would use lighting, in a precise manner. The best responses were often where candidates had clearly explored lighting in a practical way and then suggested clear ways on how they would apply this with clear justification demonstrating a sound knowledge and understanding of the way lighting can enhance mood and atmosphere for an audience.

**What did candidates find a challenge?**

A few candidates did not read the question fully and responded in relation to sound. A minority also offered responses in relation to several moments rather than just the one, which the question required. There were quite a few responses that used lighting colour in a rather simplistic manner, i.e. Red to convey danger. This was often the case with lower scoring responses.



### Question 6

6 From the list below select the character from the performance text you have studied.

Describe the **vocal and physical skills** an actor playing the character could use to show emotion in **one** key moment.

Give examples from your performance text to justify your response.

Key moment .....

<i>Blood Brothers</i>	Mickey
<i>Death of a Salesman</i>	Linda
<i>Find Me</i>	Any Verity
<i>Gizmo</i>	Ben
<i>Kindertransport</i>	Faith
<i>Missing Dan Nolan</i>	Dan
<i>Misterman</i>	Thomas

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..... [8]

This question was answered with good knowledge and understanding by most candidates. Candidates clearly understood the performance requirements for the chosen character and were able to offer very practical ways of how they would use vocal and physical skills in performance, with very sound justification. There was good application of vocal and physical skills in the chosen key moment to clearly convey the intentions and higher scoring candidates gave a balanced response to voice and physical skills, capturing a clear interpretation of their selected role.

**What did candidates do well?**

The best responses were often where candidates had given full description of the use of physical and vocal skills backed up with some clear justification in relation to the key moment chosen. Candidates often discussed how they had explored the moment in rehearsal and reflected the practical work they had produced. Strong responses often revealed that candidates were able to use specialist and technical vocabulary well.

**What did candidates find a challenge?**

Candidates not answering the question was sometimes an issue. A few candidates did not state the moment or scene chosen and there was a tendency for justifying the chosen moment, why it is dramatic, describing the plot, rather than discussing the vocal and physical skills required to play the character in performance. Several responses focused purely on proxemics or what costume the character could wear also. In less successful responses, candidates sometimes missed the opportunity to move beyond the descriptive, outlining what actors would do. While some of these responses were detailed in a range of values, gesture, facial expression, proxemics, levels etc, suggesting a clear grasp of what the candidate wanted to achieve, the level of justification needed to access the higher level marks was sometimes missing.



Question 7

7 Semiotics are used to provide visual clues to the audience.

As a director, justify how you would use **semiotics** for **one key moment** of the performance text you have studied.

Key moment .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [8]

The responses to this question were varied. Many candidates answered with good knowledge and understanding of how a director could explore and use semiotics to create deeper meaning in performance. Some candidates again focused solely on proxemics, but often negated to discuss how or why this aspect helps to establish meaning from a semiotic viewpoint. Many candidates seemed to have a grasp on the term semiotics from the advanced information and the more successful candidates provided a range of examples from lighting to application of proxemics and costume; reinforcing how a culmination of dramatic elements contribute meaning to one moment.

**What did candidates do well?**

The best responses referred back to the question and responded from a directors' perspective. Many candidates clearly discussed technical semiotics; set, lighting, sound, costume and positioning of characters on stage at the chosen key moment within the play and often fully justified these choices of semiotics and the impact this would have on the moment and the play as a whole. This was acceptable as the director has a significant input into these choices, however only a few candidates recognised the use of the actors as a semiotic potential.

**What did candidates find a challenge?**

Some candidates purely focused on proxemics, often in relation to one character only. There was little discussion of how semiotics could be explored and developed within the moment chosen and there was often little reference to the role of the director within this. Also, several candidates responded to this question in relation to the social historical and cultural elements of the text, often providing extensive information about the political and social events surrounding their chosen moment, but offered no semiotics within this. This issue, where candidates had appeared to attempt a questions from a previous years papers and had responded to that question ,not the one on this paper, was also sometimes an issue with other questions, especially Section B. . A few candidates did not know what was meant by 'semiotics', and as a consequence, were unable to answer this question.

### Question 8

- 8 Give an example of a **set design** that could be used for the **opening scene/section** of the performance text you have studied.

Justify how the set design communicates meaning to the audience.

As part of your answer use the box on the following page to roughly sketch an annotated design to help explain the layout of the set. There are no marks for the quality of the sketch. **[8]**

.....

.....

.....

.....

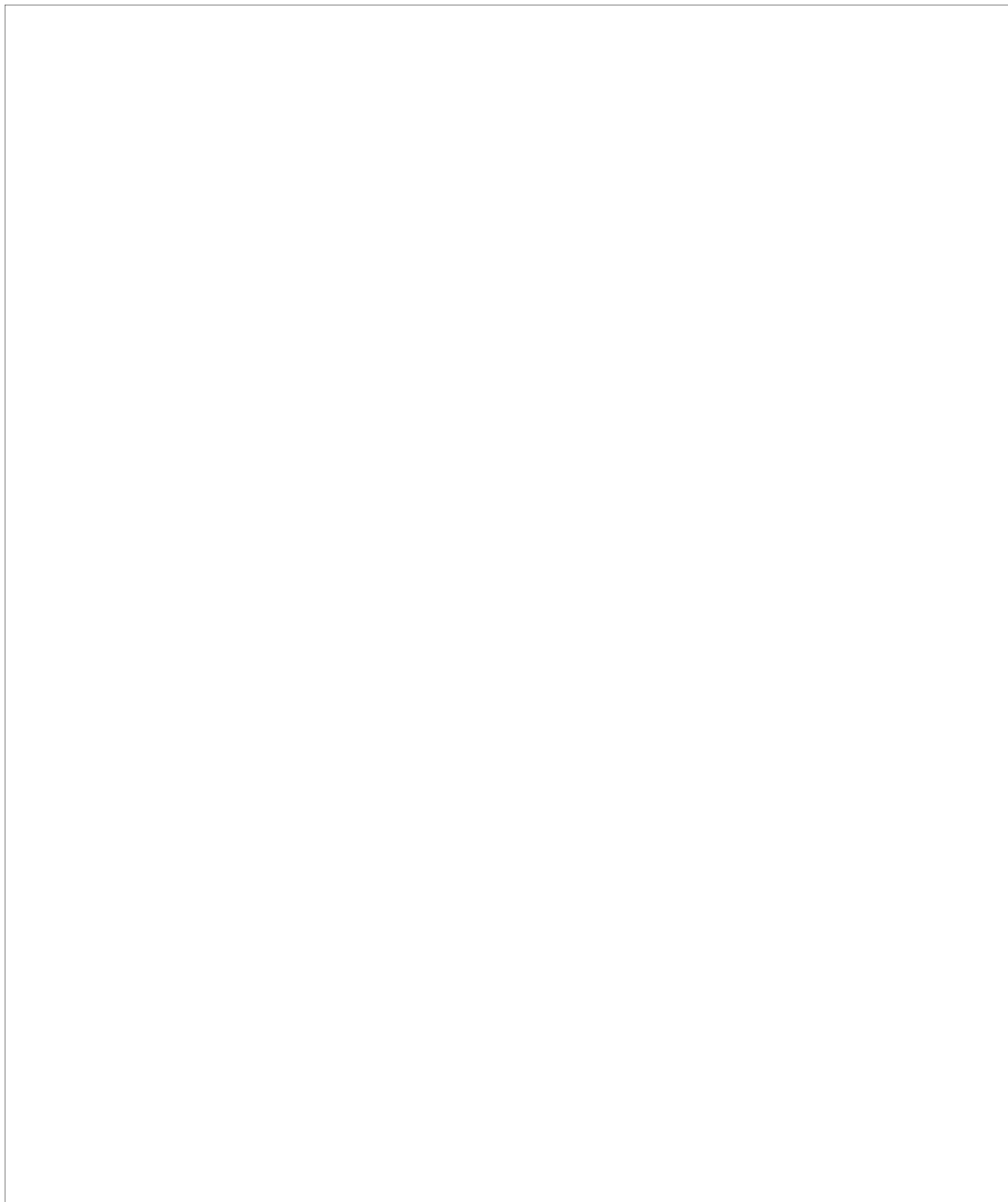
.....

.....

..... **[8]**

## Question 8 (continued)

**8** continued: design box

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a design or drawing response.

This question was answered with good knowledge and understanding of the role of a set designer by most candidates. Candidates clearly identified the opening sections of the play and were able to offer very practical ways of how they would creatively design sets in performance, often with very sound justification. There were many good responses for this question with some carefully thought out and justified examples for the choices made. In some cases, the explanation was sufficiently detailed without reference to any diagram. Conversely, other students were able to convey their ideas with highly detailed and annotated diagrams.

**What did candidates do well?**

Many candidates described in detail the set they would create and produced simple but functional floor plans that were accurately annotated to good effect. The best responses were often where candidates had designed a functional set with a good knowledge and understanding of set design, often giving full justifications for their choice of style of staging and discussing how they had explored the moment in rehearsal, reflecting the practical work they had produced. Stronger responses often revealed that candidates were able to use technical vocabulary well.

**What did candidates find a challenge?**

Some candidates focused solely on where they would position characters or designed a set that did not cover a moment from the opening section of the play. The interpretation of the opening sections was applied liberally by examiners, however moments that were obviously not within this, towards the end of Act 1 or the start of Act 2, could not be given marks. Centres should encourage candidates to annotate rather than label their sketches as many candidates labelled the positioning of characters, while the more successful responses gave clearer annotated information on the set. Several candidates also spent great time in producing a highly elaborate and 'artistic' sketch which was not required for this question. A simple, annotated sketch was perfectly acceptable. It was noted also that several candidates responded to costume design, not set. Some of these responses were very strong costume design responses, but unfortunately could not be given marks. This was another example of candidates not reading the question or offering a pre-planned response from a previous paper.

## Exemplar 2

~~7~~<sup>year</sup> old Mickey has old handed down cloths wich are always dirty.  
 his jens have holes and stained up holes. His top is also  
 dirty which might hav some food stains.  
 his shoes might have holes in them to and they might be  
 a bit big for him.  
 his hair is all over the place and might be ~~long~~  
 long hair as well.  
 his hands and feet might have mud on them.  
 He some times might have a large pass down jumper.

This response clearly displays this and the candidate, who has a strong vision for design, has missed out on a potential 8 marks.

## Section B overview

It was pleasing that the vast majority of candidate responses to this section were often detailed, thoughtful and displayed a full range of subject specific terminology to enhance the answers. As in previous years, the choice of play was highly varied and many incorporated the use of digital performances, which is perfectly acceptable. It was really pleasing to note that many centres had managed to view 'live' theatre again this year after not having access for over 2 years.

This section of the examination required candidates to evaluate, study and analyse how the key performers used their acting skills to hold the interest of the audience in a piece of live theatre chosen by the Centre. The question is asking the candidate to analyse the impact the actors' skill had on them as an audience member. It was noted by examiners that many candidates had analysed from a personal perspective while demonstrating that they had a clear understanding of many key aspects of a live theatrical performance. Many candidate responses were insightful and balanced often revealing the candidates understanding of how drama and theatre are developed and performed and offering concise and thoughtful evaluation of the actors' skill in creating meaning and insight in performance. Only a handful of candidates answered this question referring to the same performance text to the one they had studied for Section A and also only a minority of candidates did not write the name, venue and date (month and year) of the live performance they have seen at the start of their response. Many examiners noted that most candidates seemed to have engaged with the productions seen, and often responded well as members of the audience. There were very good examples of where candidates had selected and used specific examples from the productions to display a very sound knowledge and understanding of the chosen actor's skill and impact, and it was clear that many candidates were well prepared for this question.

An issue again noted by examiners was that there appeared to be an increase in the number of 'pre-prepared' theatre reviews, where candidates had prepared a potential response and did not focus on the specifics of the question, rather offering an overall review of the performance which sometimes did not include any reference to acting skills at all. This is a shame as these candidates could clearly offer a valuable response to this question, but not responding to the question requirements inevitably resulted in low marks being given. However, in general there were many high scoring candidates who embraced the demands of the question in terms of holding the interest of the audience and moving away from a pre-prepared response. These candidates were successful in the description of the moment, skills conveyed and the effect in holding the audiences' interest. This was contrasted by some lower scoring candidates who were variable in their examples regarding acting skills and often had little links back to the effect on them, as an audience member.

## Question 9

- 9\* Evaluate how the key performers used their acting skills to hold the interest of the audience in the live performance you have seen.

In your answer, you might consider:

- physical interpretation of character
- vocal skills
- use of performance space
- relationship between the performer and the audience
- use of performance conventions.

You should use appropriate drama and theatre terminology.

**[30]**

### What did candidates do well?

Candidates who scored well in this question discussed and evaluated many of the following aspects:

- A clear description of the skills the actor used in their characterisation and performance, including physically or visual elements.
- How the actor's skill created and communicated meaning by actions, voice, gestures, presence, proxemics, etc
- How the actors effectively used props and/or stage design, especially in relation to how the actor communicated this to the audience during the performance.
- The positive and/or negative impacts of the actor's skill in performance.
- The impact the actor's skill had on the candidate as an audience member.
- Clear examples used to support their evaluative statements about the performance and the role/impact of the actor on them, as an audience member and the overall impact in general.
- A clear evaluate response to the strengths of the actor's skill in the performance and the impact this had on them as an audience member with clear specific and detailed reference to the production.
- Clear examples used which were relevant to the performance seen, not dependent on the script.
- The impact on the audience was discussed in detail in relation to the use of acting technique.
- Higher grade responses from candidates often offered a clear distinction between actor and the character.
- The candidate's use of specialist drama and theatre terminology was highly developed and integrated throughout their response.
- Candidates offered a highly developed understanding of how meaning is communicated to an audience in a live performance and their line of reasoning throughout their response was well-developed, sustained, relevant and logically structured
- The response was clearly focused on the analysis of 'acting skills' and the impact on the audience.
- The strongest responses were often those, which placed the performer at the heart of the response and then wove their discussion of a range of theatrical methods around it.

### What did candidates find a challenge?

It was pleasing that most candidates had prepared well for this question, which allowed the vast majority to answer positively in a variety of ways. As discussed above, some candidates responding to a 'pre-prepared' question was an issue. Some candidates referred to the actor/character with no discernible differentiation. The use of subject specific language and terminology was also limited, although there were far less examples this year where candidates' responses were very short. Lower-level responses

tended to be more descriptive rather than analytical and evaluative and tended to present basic opinions on the impacts of the actor's skill in the production which focused on description rather than analysis. In these instances, the examples given to support the candidates' analysis lacked specific detail and tended to focus on only one or two aspects of the performance only, with usually only a very tentative link made between the actors' skill and the impact on the audience's response or holding the audience interest. There was also a tendency for many lower end candidates to spend a great deal of time describing in detail, the play, plot, set and key themes/messages given within the piece. This was not needed for this question and candidates often wasted time here and left little to actually respond to the requirements of the question. As already discussed, these lower scoring responses tended to be more descriptive answers, often discussing aspects that were not relevant to the audience. Some candidates also provided an introduction and conclusion to the written prose, which is not also necessary. Some responses at the mid to lower end drifted from performer to design, most notably when highlighting how actors use design elements to convey a role. This often resulted in responses being simplistic in creating a developed line of reasoning. Some candidates struggled to move beyond the lower levels due to a lack of precision in their analysis and evaluation often making sweeping statements in order to move onto their next point. In these cases, candidates didn't manage to use their time so some responses were quite short and lacked detail, struggling with the balance of analysis and evaluation, often favouring one over the other.

### Exemplar 3

I love you mum I promise I won't die is a  
 Verbatim performance written by Mark Wheeler  
 in which the performance is about the dangers  
 of drugs and the importance of what drugs  
 can do to young people. Mark Wheeler wanted  
 to educate the audience on this. It is based  
 off a real story about a boy named Dan  
 who took a quantity of MDMA and overdosed  
 and sadly passed away.

Exemplar 3 displays the tendency for less successful responses to spend a great deal of time describing in detail, the play, plot, set and key themes/messages given within the piece. The candidate used a significant time to detail, very well and very clearly, aspects that cannot be given marks for as they are not relevant to this response.



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