OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

DRAMA AND THEATRE

H459
For first teaching in 2016

H459/21 Summer 2024 series

Contents

Introduction

Our moderators' 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. 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.

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General overview

Overall, the examination ran very smoothly. Examiners reported seeing some very exciting and engaging performances, some challenging and an increase and successful approach to more traditional texts. There was evidence that previous reports had been helpful and acted on, leading to some improvements.

Administration

Examiners reported that most centres provided smooth and efficient administrative arrangements and were pleased to meet any requests by examiners.

The time-sensitive paperwork required is important. Although most centres met the deadline of seven days for sending the examiner the required documentation, a small number missed deadlines and the concept proforma and running order and associated documentation was received very late.

The seven-day deadline for documentation and concept proforma is in place to ensure parity for candidates and to give examiners sufficient time to mark the concept proforma in advance and to prepare their paperwork for the marking of the performances. It is important for examiners to have an idea of the intention of candidates in their performances, and this aids examiners' understanding of what candidates are doing. In addition, non-receipt by the seven-day deadline puts candidates at risk of receiving a zero for that element of the examination.

As a reminder, the items required are as follows.

- The concept proforma for each candidate as a hard copy. Electronic versions are not acceptable. The proforma must be signed by the candidate and centre confirming that the work is that of the individual candidate alone. It is also important for the candidate's name and number to appear on each answer page in case they become detached from the front page.

- The running order is very important for those centres with more than one group and must have candidate names and candidate numbers and be organised in order of performances.

- Photographs of candidates in costume are essential and most centres provided these rather than school photos of the candidates when they were younger. Photos can be provided on the day and do not need to be sent in advance.

- Information about the text to be performed as this helps the examiner check they are familiar with the text and playwright before marking the concept proforma and watching the performance. It is not necessary to send copies of the text to the examiner.

- Directions to the centre, and how to access if the examination is after normal hours. One examiner was stranded outside locked gates for some time and managed to get in only when a teacher was leaving and opened the gate.

There will be occasions where last minute illness, or someone leaving the course shortly before the performance, leaves the group needing a non-examined person to step in. This must always be approved by OCR in advance, and evidence of this approval should be given to the examiner before the performance taking place. Centres with very small cohorts that fall below three candidates must receive authorisation from OCR, and the number must be made up so that there are a minimum of three performers. It is permissible for the stand-in people to use a text.

Apart from this, the only time a non-examined candidate may be used is if a particular section requires a sleeping partner and it is impossible or unreasonable to use one of the other candidates. This should be

rare. It is important for centres to know that apart from these two examples, the use of non-examined candidates must not occur.

The specification states that it is a requirement the centre provides an audience for performances. The specification gives details of the nature of audiences permitted. When the entry required more than one performance group, the audience was made up of the actual examination class, taking it in turns to perform and to watch their peers, which is acceptable. Other centres also had classes watching from younger years or possibly potential GCE students. In one example the audience was partly made up from visiting students from other centres who were considering taking the course the following year. Many centres chose an after-hours performance and had invited candidates' parents and friends to watch. Without exception, examiners reported how an audience can help candidates respond positively and enhance the atmosphere.

It is a requirement of the specification for the performance to be filmed and then chaptered if there is more than one group being examined. At the time of writing, the film must be placed on a DVD or memory stick in a format that can be easily viewed on a DVD player or computer. The DVD or memory stick should then be sent to the examiner as soon as possible. The Repository is not to be used, and centres should use the current system. Most centres did this within the submission window.

It is important that the camera is located so that it captures all the area in which candidates are performing, while avoiding wherever possible filming the head and shoulders of the examiner. Almost all centres were able to use a performance space that was quiet and without interruption.

Concept proforma

What candidates did well

Some very high-level analysis of their own dramatic intentions was seen, applying dramatic knowledge and understanding of techniques and practitioners and clear in-depth understanding of their texts studied for performance, explaining the original intentions of the playwright, and when the play was written.

There was always a good sense of understanding the characters and plot of the performance text that had been studied. This was generally combined with the ability to set it in its social, cultural and historical context.

Almost all candidates wrote convincingly about their approach to the role that they were playing. Even where they struggled to relate this to the challenges of the play, they nevertheless understood the key elements that they were attempting to communicate to their audience.

Examiners reported that candidates generally:

- discussed the details of how they intended to play their roles

- explained the themes of the play

- understood and articulated the intention of the playwright

- made links to practitioners they had explored and how they had influenced their work

- referenced live theatre they had seen to inspire their own vision.

Candidates generally answered Questions 2 and 3 particularly well. There were some very good examples of responses that looked at the intended artistic vision set out by the performers. This was enhanced by a detailed understanding of the character's importance in the role they were playing. Other

successful responses were ones that addressed the context of the playwright and the genre and style of the play. Other examples of good practice included commenting on previous productions that were then compared/contrasted to their own interpretation. This was explored considering the modern-day audience perspective and aligned with the depth required for Question 1.

One examiner reported, *'Concept proforma were very good at commenting on stylistic features of the chosen plays, alongside the character portrayals, set, lighting, costume and sound. Often these investigated themes and context alongside style, and this aided the overall understanding of the playwright's intentions.'*

What did candidates find challenging?

Some examiners reported that many candidates ignored the instruction to identify and discuss the dramatic demands of the performance text and wrote about one of two things: either the challenges of the content of the play, or the challenges of the specific role they were allocated to perform. In a couple of instances, candidates focused on the size of the part and the challenge of learning lines – something that may have been true, but not an appropriate response to the question.

Less successful responses did not discuss the socio-economic significance of the text they had studied, and many general stereotypes were offered about plays from the 1980s. These tended to lump together indiscriminately people who were, for example, poor, unemployed, from the North, 'affected by Thatcher', had missed out on education, or were treated badly because they were women. This was often combined with sweeping generalisations about the intentions of the playwright in portraying these issues.

The knowledge and understanding of technical elements of the drama, the referencing of practitioners, theatrical style, and performance techniques were all often somewhat limited. Artistic vision was sometimes more focused on issues of stage practicalities which should have been considered under 'demands'.

The role to be played and the characteristics of the extract tended to be used as a general 'what I want to say about our piece', rather than have a focus to a question's elements.

There are still many candidates who just wanted to, and relied, on retelling the plot and informing the examiner of all they knew of the playwright without implicit or explicit links to what they did with this information in a practical sense, or with regards to their vision.

There were a few examples where candidates did not respond fully to one of the questions and provided one brief paragraph if they did attempt the question. As the concept proforma is marked holistically, this places a candidate at a severe disadvantage.

There are still candidates who did not address the questions as three separate and distinct questions.

There were also candidates who did not clearly address the question headings. Under 'demands', some examiners reported lengthy accounts of playwright's intentions that made the actual demands of the work either forgotten completely or a brief mention at the end. There needs to be balance, where the heading is asking more than one thing; vision often included demands that were not considered under the previous heading. Development of role was sometimes more a literary analysis than a dramatic exploration of what they were seeking to assimilate as a performer and express on stage.

There needed to be more focus on the whole text rather than the scene which was being performed. Answers for Question 3 sometimes focused on the rehearsal process rather than the specifics of the character nuances. Aspects such as hot seating were addressed as ways in which the candidates prepared for performance. While there was some contextual understanding, this could have been

enhanced with further depth and looking into previous productions of the play. Often there was repetition with points being made across the three questions. Discussion of the rehearsal process is very important if properly focused.

One examiner reported that there was rather too much about what the playwright felt about issues, rather than how it is manifested in the text/action and how it can then be realised in a dramatic context.

A common theme from examiners was that there was insufficient understanding of dramatic structure, both in the overall text and across the extract, and insufficient use of relevant vocabulary. There is a glossary in the specification, little of which appears in the discussions.

One examiner commented, *'Some responses were very thin and lacked depth and academic rigour. Some candidates couldn't give examples of previous productions of the play which had informed their artistic decisions. The final question on the concept proforma was sometimes answered as a commentary of what was going to happen as opposed to identification of specific moments or some identification of shaping, climax, etc. and what to look out for.*

'It would be good to see more technical language used at this level to describe structure; dramatic ideas and production elements.'

Advice to centres about the concept proforma

The advice given in previous reports is still relevant.

- Consider breaking down the questions so that the detail in the answers can be addressed in line with the required responses.

- Deconstruct the headings and analyse them as they relate to the work undertaken, create a set of bullet points to cover which address those headings, before writing the analysis, organise them into a structured sequence, and use those bullets as the structure for the writing.

- Do not go overboard: the most successful submissions were often not the most expansive.

- Be respectful: referring to practitioners as 'Stan' and 'Bert' at A Level is inappropriate.

- Do not take a recipe approach to practitioners, for example, referring to practitioners as 'We added a bit of Brecht with a bit of Berkoff, then we used Stanislavski…' A stronger approach would be to refer to the techniques they used in rehearsal and which specific practitioners they found useful and why.

- Make sure they have a thorough understanding of the playwright's original intention and the style of the original production; watch examples of different interpretations to gain some idea of what could work and why.

- Make sure students have the technical knowledge and vocabulary to allow them to confidently explain their artistic decisions effectively; guiding the examiner to look for specific moments within the production or specific elements of characterisation.

- Focus more closely on the context of the play or plays being studied and align this with the original intentions of the playwright. This can then be compared to modern interpretations more closely, allowing for a better understanding of the desired impact.

Responses to **Question 1** should focus on:

- the demands of the **whole** play – the style, the setting, the characters, the action, the use of language, the period, etc.
- how this has been performed in the past and how others may have performed it for a present-day audience (this latter aspect was often completely ignored).
- responses should quote understanding based on practical work on the whole text.

This could include the work done in studying the whole text before selecting the extracts.

In other words, what does the candidate know and understand about performing the play that has been selected, researched studied and practised?

Responses to this first question should neither refer to nor need mention, unless specifically relevant, the role played by the candidate, the extract(s)/sections chosen, nor the way they are to be performed in the examination.

Responses to **Question 2** should focus on:

- having acquired that knowledge and understanding of the whole play through study, research and practice, in what ways does the candidate intend to project the intentions of the whole play to the audience through the extract(s)/sections being presented?
- how does the candidate's performance encapsulate, consider, demonstrate, conclude, prefigure, explain, expose the whole play? This could be through character(s) and interactions, action, tension, dialogue, setting, costume, etc.

For example, in playing the opening scene in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, the three daughters, their father and assorted husbands, courtiers and attendants, must give the audience a notion of the characters that are to unfold to us later in the play.

Responses to **Question 3** should focus on:

- the role the candidate is to play in the selected extract{s}.

Moments, lines of dialogue, actions should be used to explain those 'most important characteristics.'

This is not a blow-by-blow narration of what the cast as a whole do or say in the extract nor is it an analysis of all the characters in the piece.

Unless the comment relates specifically to the role played, there need not be any mention of characters other than the one played by the candidate.

There should be reference made to the ways in which the candidate has approached these characteristics practically in rehearsal and perhaps comment on intention behind the choices they have made, for example, in movement, speech, positioning, costume, etc.

Texts

It is important to make sure candidates are offered sufficient challenge by the text selected. Centres should make sure that in group work all candidates have reasonably equal exposure to demonstrate their skills. It is recognised that this can be difficult with a large group, but judicious editing can often give some balance to the role opportunities. Inevitably candidates will suffer if they have not had sufficient exposure to demonstrate a range of skills. Examiners cannot give marks for what they do not see.

The texts chosen must have been approved after submission to the Drama Text management service. Centres cannot use texts set within the specification for another unit.

Section 5g on page 63 of the online copy of the specification gives clear guidance regarding the suitability of content. Care should be taken that centres do not confuse this with the guidance for texts to be studied, as what is allowed is different from what can be performed.

Candidates' performances **may not** contain:

- *strong violence acted out against another character which dwells on the infliction of pain or injury*

- *sadistic violence*

- *frequent use of very strong language*

- *detailed or extended portrayals of sexual activity*

- *scenes of sexual violence*

- *nudity*

- *scenes explicitly demonstrating drug taking.*

It is the responsibility of the centre to check these criteria against the text chosen, as the text management service does not check a text regarding the suitability listed above but ensures it does not clash with texts being used in another part of the examination, or that has been considered inappropriate. There was a small number of plays being chosen that did not meet these requirements, especially regarding '*frequent use of very strong language*', and *'sadistic violence'.* While this did not affect the awarding of marks on this occasion, centres should make sure they meet the requirements.

Occasionally centres edited texts to fit the number of candidates and for other appropriate reasons, very successfully. When this happens, it is important to make sure the integrity of the original. Centres and candidates are not allowed to add material written by themselves or by anyone else. Centres must make sure they have checked they have permission from the copyright owners to perform the text.

Performance

Examiners enjoyed a wide range of performance by candidates who clearly understood theatrical demands and how they could manipulate the drama experience with an audience. Several examiners reported that there was a wide range of texts chosen. The trend of last year continued with a move away from what had become almost stock texts, with more adventurous and potentially imaginative texts being chosen along with more examples of classic texts developed and performed imaginatively. There was an increase in the use of comedic texts.

What did candidates do best?

- Centres showed they were able to do closely choreographed highly stylised ensemble pieces sometimes extremely well.

- Some candidates used their researched knowledge and understanding of the play to inform skill and technique choices; also, those who re-imagined or re-interpreted texts still had a very clear idea of the original style to build on.

- There were some highly stylised interpretations that attempted to capture the essence of the time/era in the costume, lighting, set and props. These elements of performance had clearly been fully rehearsed, and this aided the confidence on stage in handling the use of props and coping with any costume issues. There were some standout performances which had believability and energy throughout with some risk-taking and insightful use of physical theatre.

- Evidence of clarity of dialogue, action/movement, slick transitions and having thought about the reduction of unnecessary clutter.

- Performance memory was excellent with few slips or prompts.

- Performances where there was a good range of technique of voice, physicality and paralanguage demonstrated.

- Several texts required accents, and these were attempted successfully and confidently.

- There were some outstanding characterisations which were engaging and moving.

- There was frequently a strong sense of an ensemble working seamlessly together.

- Candidates made good use of their resources – even when limited.

One examiner wrote, *'There were some fabulous characterisations which were incredibly engaging and moving. Candidates worked well together and there was frequently a strong sense of an ensemble working beautifully together. Performances were often pacy, confident and well-rehearsed.'*

What did candidates find a challenge?

- Some performers could be static in their interpretations with a lack of confidence in the use of set, costume and props. Where performances needed development, this was with characters that were often underplayed – the naturalism would have suited film drama rather than a theatrical performance and some of this naturalism did not communicate as well as it could have done in stage drama.

- Allowing their dialogue to be too conversational or too rushed as though they were trying to get through their lines rather than allowing thinking and reaction time for the characters.

- Other candidates did not think about their physicality. There was too much sitting down and crossing of legs in a comfortable position while delivering far less comfortable lines or being stuck behind a desk or other piece of furniture.

- Some candidates applied the physical techniques of a third party in a formulaic way to their work. This led to very average replications of Frantic Assembly (mostly, for example) and a lack of original ideas.

- What is the whole character? Feelings are only important if they can be communicated to the audience, otherwise no matter how much the actor 'feels' it is still only internalised without an outward expression.

- Some performances seemed self-centred and inward-looking, even self-indulgent (suggested one examiner). A small number of candidates didn't seem to care about reaching their audience, playing at them rather than to them. One examiner said, '*…audience relationship at A Level has always been part of the effectiveness of the piece. In this example they didn't much seem to care, even where there was an audience.'*

- For the socially disturbing and violent pieces, it was almost as if there was an intention to make the audience endure the performance. Artaud has its place but for examination it is more limited as performance than a lot of centres realise.

- Some candidates had difficulty in maintaining their role, especially when an individual did not have a speaking part for a while.

- Less successful candidates fell into cliched and unconvincing characterisations. Their performances lacked depth and meaning. These tended to be performers who did not demonstrate a real understanding of what was required by their specific scene or play.

- Performers occasionally lacked vocal clarity and dynamic variation.

Advice to centres about performances

Shouting lines does not always produce a dramatic moment, no matter how sudden. Most playwrights are economic in their writing, so every word matters. If the line is thrown away by excessive shouting, then the meaning has gone too.

Focus on the confidence in the performers by fully rehearsing elements such as the use of costume and props. I would also encourage bolder choices to be made in terms of characterisation and physicality as there was a tendency to underplay elements and rely on extreme naturalism in the interpretations.

Candidates should carry out in-depth analysis of character motivations, beyond simply their relationship with others in front of them, to explore what their relationship is with themselves and how that then impacts on how they deal with others.

Groups should spend more time thinking about, planning and executing their blocking, physical presence, and projection.

Pacing of their performance is very important. Some texts need fast picking up of cues and momentum, and without it the performance will appear bland.

Make sure they really understand their play/scene/character and what that character is trying to say to the audience.

Spend some time on vocal work, specifically during the A Level course, to provide candidates with the knowledge to put this to good use as they work on their own exam pieces.

Use costume and other aspects of design to enhance the performance experience.

Less strong candidates were sometimes so focused on delivering lines, they missed easy opportunities to develop much more precisely focused physicality.

Wandering feet and wavy hands detract from vocal delivery. Candidates need to have awareness of the space in which they are working and how to use it.

One examiner said, *'…vocal delivery is still an area to develop, volume is not the only vocal skill, more use of varied pace and pause, understanding the need for "thinking time" for the character(s) and the audience.'*

Make sure candidates:

- understand the journey of the character and bring out the light and shade of this with their performance skills
- understand what they are saying
- start strongly and confidently – some candidates improved as they 'warmed-up' throughout the piece.

Centres should select texts that suit the strengths of the students – centres which chose texts because they would be artistically challenging without any thought to the skills of their candidates do them a disservice.

Design

As stressed in previous reports, it is essential that the level of demand of the design reflects the level of exam and is equivalent to the demand placed on the actors. This series saw some of the best design work experienced by examiners.

One examiner reported, *'This area has got immeasurably better in a short space of time, with some above "A Level" work seen.'*

The specification lists what is required clearly. The best examples of design work were supported not only by relevant comments in the concept proforma, but also by working to scale models (set design), detailed costume and make-up research ideas leading from conception to production, and good filming of the outcome. Most candidates took up the opportunity to give an oral presentation covering their research, issues raised during the development of ideas, practical challenges and working with the performers. Some walked the examiner around their set, others took them into the lighting/sound box, or

to their controls to demonstrate some of the lighting or sound states; others had actors modelling their costumes to demonstrate their effectiveness in performance. While there are no marks for a presentation, whatever the format, they all helped the examiner understand what they were assessing.

An understanding and use of technical elements and vocabulary are essential if higher marks are to be achieved. Reference to design practitioners appropriate to the design chosen can also be supportive.

Guidance

The benchmark is that there must be parity in demand between candidates selecting design and those selecting acting as their performance skill.

The concept proforma can be very helpful by providing evidence of the thought processes of the candidate. Other supporting evidence – as described below – is essential if candidates are to access the higher mark bands. The concept proforma should signpost and provide details of the decision-making process in preparation for designs the examiner will see.

Hardly any candidates now fall into the category of doing design because their attendance is poor, or they have difficulty working in a group. Even candidates in centres with limited resources have been able to present effective designs with extensive back-up research and material.

Health and safety

This is an important and essential element for consideration in design work. Whether it is the use of scissors and sewing machines, potential trips and falls in costume design, the danger of heights with rigging or electrocution and overheating with lighting; the level of decibels in sound; or the safe use of tools and weight of materials in manufacturing and the security of sets; all areas of design have their own health and safety challenges and should be considered. It might not be stated explicitly in the specification but is an important element of learning in the different design options.

The highest performing candidates will include many of the suggestions below.

Costume

It is important that candidates provide evidence that they have, themselves, had the ideas and have knowledge and understanding of how to make them work.

Evidence may include:

- a presentation to explain their ideas (but the examiner will not ask questions)
- design board of ideas
- photographs
- diagrams
- research
- swatches of fabric
- development/progression leading to final design including reasons for choices.

The presentation should provide a clear explanation of the physical evidence or artefacts; this will clarify what is seen, which may not otherwise always be made clear. How the explanation is presented will not be marked.

There should be evidence of understanding of genre, the period in which the play is set, and the social/historical context. Has the candidate considered alternative means of meeting the design? Strong candidates will cover this in their concept proforma as well as in the physical evidence presented.

The realisation should match with the ideas presented – changes are acceptable and part of the artistic process but should be explained. The best results show progression and development of ideas from first ideas to the final design

It is not necessary for candidates to make the costume; how the costume was sourced does not affect marking, but the relevance and the manner of, and reasons for outsourcing are important.

Costume can be adapted from charity shop stock, but how and why this is done is needs explaining.

There may be some repetition of points made in the concept proforma which is acceptable if it serves to enhance the original explanation and illustrates original ideas.

The final design should illustrate character, personality, mood, relevance to text and its context.

It should be appropriate for the character in the performance at the specific point in the script/the situation at the time.

It is essential that designs consider the practicalities for the actor wearing it – ease of movement, comfort, and that it will not fall apart. Masks will need particular attention.

Set Design

A presentation may be useful, walking the examiner around the set, demonstrating scenes and their changes using the box set model, to help:

- understand the space available, (studio, pros arch stage, in-the-round, etc.).
- know where the audience is to be located.
- see the dimensions available (leads to scale drawing of ground plan) including height, for access.
- realise the equipment available, boxes, furniture, flats, drapes, etc.
- see the ground plan, to scale, indicating entrances and exits, furniture, flats, etc.
- know the number of scenes required. Are there changes of scene. Who? How?
- see the challenges of interior and/or exterior locations.
- know what does the script ask for in terms of setting?
- remember the practicalities of moving scenery, placing trucks, using a fly tower (if available).
- know how heavy is scenery and furniture for scene changing and who is going to do the changes? Will this cause a delay on the stage action?
- know how many actors are on stage and what are their requirements for furniture and props?
- see the set box with video 'tour' around it – could have a voice-over rationale.
- explain what they are trying to represent; is it naturalistic, symbolic or something else?
- know what has been the work needed to create the set? What has been made, painted, found or outsourced?

A set model is a requirement, although this can be in digital format if a centre has CAD facilities.

One examiner reported, *'In one centre, they had built a robust scale model of their studio space in 18 mm plywood, with doorway cut-outs, painted it black and each candidate used it to present/video their set.*

'They all knew what scale they were working to and, as one commented about using the same box, "it's only the same as when we have to change the set itself."'
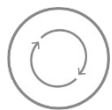
Assessment for learning
Links to useful sites: https://dramatics.org/read-render-realize/ https://specialtytheatre.com/set-design-101-basics-designing-great-theatre-sets/

Lighting (LX)

Candidates should know what they've got to use and know how to use it to get what they want. They need to:

- understand the equipment available – how many channels available? Possible limitations on power available?

- know the types of lanterns available/to be used – profile, flood, fresnel, moving heads, parcans and LED varieties

- know the rig plan indicating basic cover and specials

- know what the script asks for in terms of lighting? Anything?

- know how many states? Are they interior or exterior?

- understand the process of building the lighting states in discussion with actors

- have an annotated script with cues

- have a cue sheet for operation levels, timing, fades.

- know what special effects are needed, for example, GOBO (**go**es-**b**efore-**o**ptics) How made? What used? Effect desired?

- have an easily readable intro about basic lighting principles and tech language and the Stanley McCandless' method, for example.

Assessment for learning
Links to useful sites: https://illuminated-integration.com/blog/mccandless-method-stage-lighting/

Sound (SFX)

Candidates need to:

- understand the equipment available – sound desk, any other effects?

- remember that sound can be collected on a phone!

- have a speaker plan – where are they located in relation to the performance space, and can they be moved to locate a sound coming from a specific place/direction?

- know what does the script ask for in terms of sound? Anything?

- understand the process of introducing sounds in discussion with actors.

- know the sourcing of sounds, for example, the internet, CD/LP, live recording.

- have an annotated script with cues.

- have a cue sheet for operation to include levels, timing, fades.

- know about the special effects – how made? What used? The 'Foley Engineer', etc.

- know about voice overs – who? Why? How executed?

- know how to achieve balance for audience with actors.

- understand if there is extraneous noise needing covering?

Assessment for learning
Useful blog post from same source as lighting looking at basics. https://illuminated-integration.com/blog/sound-design-for-theatre/

Most common causes of centres not passing

Concept proforma

- Poor focus and the questions have not been addressed

- Lack of academic rigour.

Performance

- Under-rehearsed pieces

- Role not demanding enough for A Level

- Insufficient exposure.

Common misconceptions

There are no common misconceptions not covered in the content above.

Avoiding potential malpractice

Malpractice is rare in this examination, but one area candidates and centres need to be aware of in the concept proforma. As it is dealing with a group activity, it is likely candidates will have worked together on research and quite properly, on their directorial intentions. They must remember, however, to make sure their responses to the questions on the concept proforma are their own work and not a composite of what their group has done where everyone writes in a similar or same way. It is essential sources are acknowledged to prevent allegations of chunks of material being copied straight from a source. Centres should be aware of the challenge of AI being used to construct responses to questions.

In performances, the opportunities for malpractice are limited. The only example seen in recent years was when sections of text had been written on various pieces of the set and on props, which was easily observed by the examiner. If a mobile phone is to be used as part of a characterisation, care should be taken by the candidate to make sure there is no performance text on it, and it may be advisable to make the examiner aware if the candidate is to have the phone for a considerable period during the performance.

Helpful resources

Set design: https://dramatics.org/read-render-realize/

https://specialtytheatre.com/set-design-101-basics-designing-great-theatre-sets/

Lighting design: https://illuminated-integration.com/blog/mccandless-method-stage-lighting/

Sound design: https://illuminated-integration.com/blog/sound-design-for-theatre/

Additional comments

Some of the texts used this series

Playwright	Name of text
Geraldine Aron	The Donahue Sisters
Mike Bartlett	Bull
Steven Berkoff	The Trial
Andrew Bovell	Things I Know to be True
Moira Buffini	Dinner
Amelia Bullmore	Di, Viv and Rose
Chris Bush	Faustus That Damned Woman
Jim Cartwright	Two
Jim Cartwright	Road
Caryl Churchill	Love and Information
Caryl Churchill	Top Girls
Caryl Churchill	Escaped Alone
Noël Coward	Hay Fever
Sarah Daniels	The Gut Girls
April De Angelis	Playhouse Creatures
Denise Deegan	Daisy Pulls It Off
Beth Flintoff	The Ballad of Maria Marten
Dario Fo	The Accidental Death of an Anarchist
Adapted by Kerry Frampton	Everyman
Richard Gadd	Baby Reindeer
John Godber	It Started with a Kiss
John Godber	Shakers
James Graham	Basset
Zinnie Harris	The Scent of Roses
Lucas Hnath	A Dolls' House, Part 2
Kneehigh	Tristan & Yseult
Henrik Ibsen	Hedda Gabler
Debbie Isitt	The Woman Who Cooked her Husband
The Play That Goes Wrong	Lewis, Shields and Sayer
Evan Linder & Andrew Hobgood	Five Lesbians Eating a Quiche
Duncan Macmillan	Lungs
Duncan Macmillan	People, Places and Things
N Malatratt	The Lady in Black
Arthur Miller	A View from The Bridge
Rona Munro	The Last Witch

Playwright	Name of text
Anthony Neilson	Edward Gant's Amazing Feats of Loneliness
Vinay Patel	Sticks and Stones
John Pielmier	Agnes of God
Evan Placey	Girls Like That
Lucy Prebble	The Effect
Niklas Radstrom	Monsters: A Play about the Killing of James Bulger
Nina Raine	Rabbit
Mark Ravenhill	Pool (No Water)
Reduced Shakespeare company	The complete works of Shakespeare (abridged)
Danny Robins	2:22 A Ghost Story
Jean Paul Sartre	No Exit
William Shakespeare	A Midsummer Night's Dream
Shelagh Stephenson	The Memory of Water
Jack Thorne	Let The Right One In
Jack Thorne	After Life
Sue Townsend	Bazaar and Rummage
Tom Wells	Broken Biscuits
Oscar Wilde	The Importance of Being Earnest
Ian Wooldridge	Animal Farm

Supporting you

Teach Cambridge

Make sure you visit our secure website **Teach Cambridge** to find the full range of resources and support for the subjects you teach. This includes secure materials such as set assignments and exemplars, online and on-demand training.

Don't have access? If your school or college teaches any OCR qualifications, please contact your exams officer. You can forward them this link to help get you started.

Reviews of marking

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our post-results services. For full information about the options available visit the OCR website.

Access to Scripts

We've made it easier for Exams Officers to download copies of your candidates' completed papers or 'scripts'. Your centre can use these scripts to decide whether to request a review of marking and to support teaching and learning.

Our free, on-demand service, Access to Scripts is available via our single sign-on service, My Cambridge. Step-by-step instructions are on our website.

Keep up-to-date

We send a monthly bulletin to tell you about important updates. You can also sign up for your subject specific updates. If you haven't already, sign up here.

OCR Professional Development

Attend one of our popular professional development courses to hear directly from a senior assessor or drop in to a Q&A session. Most of our courses are delivered live via an online platform, so you can attend from any location.

Please find details for all our courses for your subject on **Teach Cambridge**. You'll also find links to our online courses on NEA marking and support.

Signed up for ExamBuilder?

ExamBuilder is a free test-building platform, providing unlimited users exclusively for staff at OCR centres with an Interchange account.

Choose from a large bank of questions to build personalised tests and custom mark schemes, with the option to add custom cover pages to simulate real examinations. You can also edit and download complete past papers.

Find out more.

Active Results

Review students' exam performance with our free online results analysis tool. It is available for all GCSEs, AS and A Levels and Cambridge Nationals (examined units only).

Find out more.

You will need an Interchange account to access our digital products. If you do not have an Interchange account please contact your centre administrator (usually the Exams Officer) to request a username, or nominate an existing Interchange user in your department.

Online courses

Enhance your skills and confidence in internal assessment

What are our online courses?

Our online courses are self-paced eLearning courses designed to help you deliver, mark and administer internal assessment for our qualifications. They are suitable for both new and experienced teachers who want to refresh their knowledge and practice.

Why should you use our online courses?

With these online courses you will:

- learn about the key principles and processes of internal assessment and standardisation

- gain a deeper understanding of the marking criteria and how to apply them consistently and accurately

- see examples of student work with commentary and feedback from OCR moderators

- have the opportunity to practise marking and compare your judgements with those of OCR moderators

- receive instant feedback and guidance on your marking and standardisation skills

- be able to track your progress and achievements through the courses.

How can you access our online courses?

Access courses from Teach Cambridge. Teach Cambridge is our secure teacher website, where you'll find all teacher support for your subject.

If you already have a Teach Cambridge account, you'll find available courses for your subject under Assessment - NEA/Coursework - Online courses. Click on the blue arrow to start the course.

If you don't have a Teach Cambridge account yet, ask your exams officer to set you up – just send them this link and ask them to add you as a Teacher.

Access the courses **anytime, anywhere and at your own pace**. You can also revisit the courses as many times as you need.

Which courses are available?

There are **two types** of online course: an **introductory module** and **subject-specific** courses.

The introductory module, Building your Confidence in Internal Assessment, is designed for all teachers who are involved in internal assessment for our qualifications. It covers the following topics:

- the purpose and benefits of internal assessment

- the roles and responsibilities of teachers, assessors, internal verifiers and moderators

- the principles and methods of standardisation

- the best practices for collecting, storing and submitting evidence

- the common issues and challenges in internal assessment and how to avoid them.

The subject-specific courses are tailored for each qualification that has non-exam assessment (NEA) units, except for AS Level and Entry Level. They cover the following topics:

- the structure and content of the NEA units

- the assessment objectives and marking criteria for the NEA units

- examples of student work with commentary and feedback for the NEA units

- interactive marking practice and feedback for the NEA units.

We are also developing courses for some of the examined units, which will be available soon.

How can you get support and feedback?

If you have any queries, please contact our Customer Support Centre on 01223 553998 or email support@ocr.org.uk.

We welcome your feedback and suggestions on how to improve the online courses and make them more useful and relevant for you. You can share your views by completing the evaluation form at the end of each course.

Need to get in touch?

If you ever have any questions about OCR qualifications or services (including administration, logistics and teaching) please feel free to get in touch with our customer support centre.

Call us on
01223 553998

Alternatively, you can email us on
support@ocr.org.uk

For more information visit
- **ocr.org.uk/qualifications/resource-finder**
- **ocr.org.uk**
- **facebook.com/ocrexams**
- **twitter.com/ocrexams**
- **instagram.com/ocrexaminations**
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