

**GCSE (9-1)**

**Examiners' report**

**DRAMA**

**J316**

For first teaching in 2016

**J316/03 Summer 2024 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 is 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.

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## General overview

Overall, the examinations ran very smoothly. Examiners reported seeing some very exciting and engaging performances. There was evidence that previous reports had been helpful and acted on, leading to some improvements. Some text choices are still not appropriate, but most were exciting and imaginatively interpreted and performed. Design evidence improved

It is important that the online Visit Booking Form (VAF) is completed in plenty of time to ensure an examiner is allocated. Please note that concept proforma must not be sent digitally but must be sent as a hard copy to the examiner at least seven days before the visit to mark performances.

## Administration

Most centres met the deadline of seven days for sending the examiner the required documentation.

Examiners reported that most centres provided smooth and efficient administrative arrangements and were pleased to meet any requests by examiners. For example, sometimes it was to adjust the location to ensure the examiner was not overlooked and this was arranged without problem.

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 is important as examiners need time to familiarise themselves with the text and the ideas and intentions candidates have interpreting them, as well as marking them before they visit. They also need to prepare their paperwork for the marking of the performances. Non-receipt by the seven-day deadline puts candidates at risk of receiving zero for that element of the examination.

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 with the centre confirming that the work is that of the individual candidate alone. Candidates should ensure their name and candidate number are written in the spaces on each answer page.
- The running order of showcase performances. This must have candidate names and candidate numbers and be organised in order of performances.
- Details of the centre such as location, availability of parking, and any ID required. If the examination is to take place out of school, hours, the examiner will need information as to how to access the site and building as many centres now have secure perimeters and once a reception is closed an examiner can be stuck outside.
- The time the centre wishes the examination to start. An increasing number of centres are opting for after school, twilight and evening visits, and some request Saturday visits so that there is quiet and easier access to facilities that may well be used by the centre during the working day.
- Although the specification refers to photographs being sent in advance, this is not necessarily very helpful, and examiners prefer photos of the candidates in costume to be available on the day, which the majority of did. Photographs of the candidates when they were in Year Seven or Year Eight were not helpful when watching performances and identifying them.

A requirement of the specification is for the performances to be filmed and then chaptered and placed on a DVD or memory stick. These must then be sent to the examiner within three days. Hyperlinks to material stored in the centre is not allowed. Although used for the coursework component, at the time of

writing there is currently no facility to upload videos using Submit for Assessment for this component. If this changes centres will be notified.

Candidates must introduce themselves before each extract, not just before the first extract. When candidates are in a group of four or more it is important that their costume makes them easily identifiable by the examiner. Some centres were imaginative about this providing sashes, arm or wrist bands and even headbands, all in bright different colours. Examiners appreciated this assistance

It is a requirement of the specification that the centre provide an audience for performances. The specification gives details of the nature of audiences permitted. Most centres had audiences that were made up of the actual examination class, taking it in turns to perform and to watch their peers. Some centres also had other classes watching from younger years or future GCSE students. An increasing number of centres had invited candidates' parents and friends to watch usually when the examination was taking place after school or in the evening, making it into an event, and which worked well. Some performed on a Saturday in front of an audience of staff, family and friends.

The allocation of an examiner is based on the receipt by OCR of the VAF. If a centre has not had contact from their examiner by the end of the first week of February, contact should be made with OCR.

## Concept Proforma

This section of the examination requires candidates to have good knowledge of the whole of the play, not just the extract that they have used for their showcase. Candidates need to:

- Know and understand the original intention of the playwright
- Research the context of when the text was written
- Comment on the relation of their extracts to the whole text
- Identify the challenges the text provides for a performer and/or designer and how they might be met
- Decide on their own intention and how they want an audience to respond
- Plan how to develop their role using drama techniques learnt during the course
- Have examples of how they have prepared as an individual in a role, not the group.

The concept proforma guides candidates into preparing thoroughly for their showcase.

## What did candidates do well?

Examiners reported many candidates wrote in good detail, the most successful focusing on and addressing the elements asked for by each question. It is not necessary to write in great length, and there were good responses that were succinct in their writing yet covered all the essential information, without repeating themselves in later questions.

The best candidates were able to provide information about the origins of the play in their responses to Question 1, explaining why the playwright had written it, and setting the text in the social and/or political context of that time. They were able to do this without going into unnecessary detail and swamping the response with a biography of the playwright. In the best responses, candidates' research had uncovered previous performances and they were able to compare the original to subsequent interpretations, and then compare it to their own intentions; sometimes taking the best ideas and building on them, sometimes commenting on the weaknesses and suggesting ways they could avoid them.

Well-focused responses kept to the brief. For example, Question 1 asks about the challenges and refers to structures. The best candidates were able to reference the whole play and avoid just describing the plot. The key word is 'demands' and while there will be challenges linked with character, the most successful candidates avoided going into detail about their role and avoided discussing general issues about the plot and were able to pick out challenging moments in the text and relate them to their significance in performance.

There were some very detailed accounts of the way that the challenges had emerged through the process rather than being clear at the outset.

In Question 2 the focus is on artistic vision. In the most successful responses, candidates understood what 'vision' meant and were able to link their own vision for their extracts with the original intention and how they had interpreted it. Where there had been subsequent productions of the play, research had enabled some candidates to discuss their own interpretation in the context of how others had interpreted the text. Another aspect some successful candidates used was to apply knowledge of practitioners and/or workshops to inform how they wanted to present their extracts. Some discussion of design and how it might support their vision was evident in well-rounded responses. Examiners reported that more candidates were able to reference the style they would choose in the context of intention and what they had written in their responses to Question 1. The most thorough responses went on to describe and explain design elements that would support their personal vision in practice, providing even more context for what they wanted to happen.

One examiner wrote, *'Nearly all the concept proforma I marked indicated good levels of understanding and engagement.'*

The question answered most successfully was Question 3. Most candidates understood their role, and that they needed to carry out preparation if their performance was to be successful. Some linked this with the demands of their vision, so they were not considering their preparation in isolation. The strongest candidates offering acting considered the drama techniques they had used and how that linked with the demands of their own role. Higher achieving candidates avoided the trap of writing about all the roles instead of focusing on their own. There is a good opportunity here to link the demands of the text (explained in Question 1), their vision (described in Question 2) and how they need to develop their role for the demands to be met and their vision achieved.

Another element that helped contribute to the achievement of high marks was explanation of how the role itself developed from first beginnings, how perhaps peers had commented on the success of their character interpretation, and how they changed their presentation of role to overcome challenges – a recognition of when something wasn't working and attempts to modify their character.

Most higher achieving candidates were clear about the demands of their own role and the relationships with other characters. Such candidates provided some good comments on specific vocal and movement ideas, semiotics and emotional expression. There were more examples of the use of drama technical language and fewer examples of generic reference to Brecht and Stanislavski, candidates instead focusing on a particular technique, naming it correctly and then explaining how its use had an impact on how they prepared their role. References to workshops using current practitioners were well-documented and underpinned technique they wanted to incorporate into their performances.

Examiners reported that a strong feature this series was the way high-achieving candidates used the rehearsal process as a scaffold to build their response to Question 3.

Answers to Question 4 were usually very clear on the kind of audience reaction that they wanted and might get. This question is underpinned by the previous three and the most successful responses managed to blend in the intentions, challenges and vision with their own character interpretation into an

intended and expected audience response. Cross-referencing rather than repeating information given in the other three responses is the key to a sound answer to Question 4.

Those responses where marks were not achieved often gave a description of what happens in the play for Question 1 and Question 2, a vague commentary on what all the character were for Question 3, and a bland comment on audience reaction without any consideration of what the candidate might have written in the earlier responses. The most successful candidates were those who stuck rigidly to the elements of each question and avoided repetition.

It is important to note that the space provided for the responses is considered sufficient for an answer that could achieve full marks, and although there is no penalty for exceeding the suggested length, some of those candidates who did have long responses took the risk of being self-penalising through generalisations and repetition. Candidates are requested not to use very small font size to fit more onto a page. Some examples went as low as font size 9, which was difficult for examiners to read comfortably.

## What did candidates find a challenge?

There are still some candidates who believe that length is equivalent to quality, with frequent repetition of points. Often there was too much narration of what is going to be seen and heard rather than an explanation of how this was derived in rehearsal.

While there are no marks for SPAG, candidates who mis-spell the names of their plays, playwrights and influences give the wrong impression of their knowledge and understanding, all for the want of some simple proofreading.

Consideration of structure was absent for many candidates except the highest-achieving, and this is an area that is clearly important when considering how to interpret their extracts. Some candidates placed too much emphasis on the playwright's background, and a literary analysis of the play, rather than focusing on the demands of bringing the play to life and the staging of the play for live theatre.

Although the majority identified the playwright and when the play was written, some candidates did not go on to explain succinctly the social and/or political context. There were again few responses where candidates referred to subsequent productions where there may have been interpretations that could have influenced the candidates' own thinking.

Some candidates did not seem to understand what was meant by 'vision' in Question 2 and ended up repeating much of what had been written as an answer for Question 1.

Question 1 is about the whole play, relevant aspects of the context, the challenges it presents and considering the way the extract(s) fit into that whole. There need be no mention of roles played or group / individual intention here. It is more useful that there is some consideration of previous presentations of the play that may inform what they are going to do. The structure of the play as a whole and the relevance of the extract chosen is an important consideration. In relation to this question, one examiner reported that

*'More focus is needed on the demands of the text on the group as a whole i.e. what will be the challenges of creating their extracts, what do they identify as being a focus needed in rehearsal to get their extracts to a final polished performance.'*

Question 2 then expands on what they are going to do with the extract and why – their own artistic intention. Here the discussion often seemed to be about how all the characters are to be played rather than discussing the individual's approach, the overall vision of the candidate, with references to genre

and style of performing the whole extract. Where appropriate, candidates could support their vision and intention with decisions on design elements. Many of the less successful responses just did not understand what vision meant and provided another narrative answer

Many candidates struggled to identify an artistic vision for their work, especially when one of the extracts was short. In such instances there was an abiding impression that the vision being offered was confined entirely to the extract they had performed, rather than providing this in the broad framework of the whole play.

There were also candidates who wrote only about design elements and how they would design a set, light the stage, costume the characters, with almost no reference to what it was these design decisions would support.

One examiner reported that, *'Candidates often commented on the artistic vision being what would literally be seen on stage rather than their individual intentions/aims as a performer i.e. what they hoped to achieve in role.'*

Question 3 is about the role(s) the candidate is taking on, how they worked on them, indicating understanding of what happens to that character and their relations with others both before and after the extract that makes this selected section significant for that role. Less successful responses here make little or no reference to drama techniques nor do they use appropriate drama vocabulary. Rehearsals and character development is missed as an important element for discussion. A few candidates approached the question not as a process but as a simple outcome. In such answers there was little acknowledgement that this question asked them to discuss the development of their own role. In less successful responses, at best there were specific examples of choices they had made; at worst, it was an analysis of character as it appeared on paper. Asking candidates to discuss rehearsal techniques would really help them to focus on development.

One examiner wrote, *'Candidates did not give enough information on the 'how' they developed their skills, using, for example, specific rehearsal techniques and tools. They often described the result of their skills rather than how they got to that point.'*

Question 4 is about the anticipated reception of their work and how they plan to manipulate that as performers or designers. Good responses here will often cross reference to their vision and intention, and the playwright's original intention where relevant.

Design candidates sometimes struggled to interpret the questions to make them relevant to design. While it is important in Question 1 to provide the same information as candidates offering acting as their skill, the later questions need to be focused on design while still being specific as described above.

In summary, candidates should be encouraged to:

- Address each question as precisely as possible focusing on the elements of each question
- Avoid repetition
- Provide supporting and specific examples
- Reference both extracts, not just one of them
- Identify the different challenges of each extract and how it might impact on the candidate's development of the role being played
- Discuss rehearsal techniques to help them to focus on development
- Use rehearsal notebooks that document changes, ideas, developments, and plan responses beforehand, draft, edit and check



- Reduce the amount written by giving specific prompting questions that precisely address each question
- Make sure students understanding of what is meant by 'artistic vision' and equip them with rehearsal strategies /tasks that help develop roles/ design.

It is important for centres and candidates to remember that the concept proforma provides a third of the marks for this component.

## Texts

The range of texts continues to be imaginative and wide-ranging. The trend from the last two years when there was evidence of more examples of classical texts, continued this series. Plays by John Godber often led to weak performances where candidates did not demonstrate a range of skills. While there were some examples that were exceptional, there were others that were weak, lacked momentum and missed opportunities for the comedy to be brought out.

Requests to use a text must be made to the OCR Text Management Service each year as there is no guarantee that a text will remain on the approved list. Despite the warning in the last two reports (2022 and 2023), several examiners saw examples where the extracts chosen were full of expletives or dealt extensively with incidents of violence, abuse or suicide. The specification makes it clear that such texts are not appropriate at this level. There are plenty of suitable texts that will allow candidates to demonstrate a broad range of skills and be engaged.

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*

The text management service does not check a text about the suitability listed above – that is the responsibility of the centre – but ensures it does not clash with texts being used in another part of the examination, or that has been considered previously as being inappropriate.

## Performance - Acting

Some examiners felt the impact of Covid seemed to have lingered on in a few cases. They reported a lack of confidence among some candidates, poor performance memory, freezing on stage, or even in some cases a refusal at the last minute to perform.

There were a few examples of some very short extracts, and in a very small number of cases, they were so short that they did not meet the minimum demands as described in the specification. Extracts do need to provide sufficient opportunity for a candidate to present a range of skills and to interact with other

characters. Most centres have recognised that smaller groups usually provide the best result and opportunities for their candidates. Monologues and duologues were used effectively when matched to the needs of a candidate, to demonstrate a range of skills.

If the two extracts chosen are to run consecutively, centres should remember there must be a break between the extracts and names and candidate numbers must be given again before the second extract begins. In such cases, when planning the extracts to use it might be worth centres considering whether running two extracts in this way gives candidates sufficient opportunity to contrast their roles and demonstrate a range of skills.

## What did candidates do well?

An exciting feature of this component is the way that some group performances take well-known plays and prepare them so well and so imaginatively that they appear as fresh, thoughtful and engaging pieces.

Transitions were so much more effective this series with most centres avoiding the frequent blackouts that have been present in the past that broke the momentum of the action.

Most candidates delivered scripts as the characters they were meant to be playing. There was some very effective use of dramatic conventions. Semiotics were used in many performances as an aid to enhance the extract.

Brought out the context using acting and well-chosen semiotics and grasping the style of the plays with success. Demonstrating performance discipline and crafting characters with both vocal and physical skills. Crafting transitions to make sure momentum was not lost and pace maintained.

There were examples of candidates taking on roles that allowed them to become someone completely different, stretching their emotional and physical capabilities.

Examiners reported a strong commitment to the role being played and that there were some good examples of creative and thoughtful staging. When used, physicality was appropriate, well-planned, and effective. Higher achieving candidates provided good evidence of emotionally connecting with their characters. Some ensemble work was accomplished. One examiner advises candidates to *'Think about the whole character, all the time. One finely-dressed Lady Bracknell had a studied vocal delivery of a grand dame, a stately posture and gliding movement across the stage, then sat down and unfortunately crossed her legs!'*

Candidates accessing higher marks often had more than one role, with each having clear differences vocally and physically.

One examiner, when asked what candidates did best, replied, *'Enjoy themselves! It became patently obvious when a candidate was relishing the opportunity to take themselves outside of themselves, to "play." Such self-confidence is not in abundance at this age, but when all those fears have been overcome, the pleasure to be had both by performer and audience is palpable.'*

A second examiner, when asked for some examples of outstanding and imaginative performance said, *"Waiting for Godot" (Beckett). Candidates clearly understood the potential comedy of the piece. Also, two candidates who performed "Lungs" and those that performed "The Wasp" were outstanding. Such mature, seamless performances that I would have paid to see. The candidates captured the essence of the characters and the text, bringing it to life so naturally, nothing elaborate was done or needed to be done, just superb acting!*

Another examiner writes, *'I was treated to some exceptional interpretations of challenging texts. So often the more challenging texts bring out the best in candidates. Across four centres I saw a sensitive and powerful interpretation of "Top Girls" by Caryl Churchill; a very funny "Stones in his Pockets" by Marie Jones; equally funny and very difficult "The Play That Goes Wrong"; an intensive and at times frightening "Flies" by Oliver Lansley; and very funny Tom Stoppard's "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead" and Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream". Other successful classic texts included various versions of "Medea" and "The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde.'*

## What did candidates find a challenge?

There were again some candidates who read from the script, in some cases making use of mobile phones. Some of these candidates delivered quite animated readings with strong characterisation, hence, the potential for much higher marks was clear.

With some candidates there was a lack of variation in vocal pitch, pacing and/or intensity. Vocal delivery not always matched by physical agility and/or good use of stage-space. There were examples of a variable sense of ensemble, especially where one or two group members were dominant. Poor articulation – often more noticeable in boys' performance – impeded effective delivery.

An examiner reported that *'Some candidates, perhaps fearful of forgetting their words, exhibited a recitation of lines. Others were guilty of rushing dialogue, with no sense of pause, no thinking time for the character or audience. There were also examples of no understanding of the power of timing, and how the pace of delivery and picking up cues can lead to an effective performance. There were also examples of wandering and shuffling and reluctance to use the space available.'*

Although overall performance memory was very good, a few candidates did not know their lines and froze up on stage. It should be noted that if a prompt is used this does not automatically lead to lower marks. Even well-known actors sometimes freeze, and it is clear to an examiner when the 'freeze' is unexpected and the candidate is well prepared, as opposed to forgetting lines through poor rehearsal and lack of preparation.

Where there were examples of weak characterisation it was often through a lack of planning and preparation. In some cases, the mature elements of the text were not matched by the maturity of the candidate, and so it was a struggle to be convincing. Such texts are best avoided.

Male candidates playing female roles were often unconvincing.

A popular text this year was 'Two' by Jim Cartwright, which had performances ranging from the very poor to exceptional. Also increasingly popular was 'Pillowman' by Martin McDonagh, which was usually very poorly performed and in some cases the candidates' interpretation came very close to breaching what the specification considers is acceptable at GCSE.

## Performance: Design

The number of design candidates increased significantly again, and pleasingly so has the standard of presentation. Most design candidates took the opportunity to provide an oral explanation of what they had done and why, signposting and in some cases demonstrating relevant areas to the examiner. This included formal presentations, PowerPoint shows, the examiner taken to the lighting desk where explanations were given and several lighting and sound states demonstrated, and costume walkthroughs, where the character wearing the costumes was able to demonstrate the effectiveness of the costume in performance.

In recent reports, the following was explained, and is just as relevant following this most recent series and for the future.

'Before anything else, the candidate must recognise that when selecting a design option, it must be the equivalent of the acting option. There is a heavy demand in, for example, learning lines, blocking, choosing and applying a style, and spending considerable time rehearsing. The design element chosen must be of similar demand. Choosing to light an extract with very simplistic lighting changes cannot be said to be the equivalent of an acting role. In the same way, choosing to do costume and make up when the play is about school children so that the only costume is school uniform that is easily sourced is unlikely to place much demand in terms of research, design, sourcing and realising and so cannot be said to be equal in demand and will not attract marks because it is not possible to show a range of skills in the area of design chosen.'

Page 29 in the specification gives a clear description of the demands and the supporting material required for each of the design options. The best set designers this series provided photographs of model to-scale sets, with scene changes indicated clearly, and photos of how it was replicated in the performance. The best costume and make up design candidates gave supporting material detailing their research into colours and fabrics, issue about designing and making, and photographs of the final product, including issues about wearability. Lighting and sound included rigging, selecting appropriate technology, proof of operation of equipment and details of different options to support the vision of the text. All design options need to provide evidence as to how their design supports the vision and intention of the extract to be performed, and any trials they conducted along the way.

### Detailed design guidance

Probably the most important thing to keep in mind is that there should 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 – can be very helpful. The concept proforma should signpost and provide details of the decision-making process in preparation for designs the examiner will see.

Fewer candidates now fall into the category of doing design because their attendance is poor or they have difficulty working in a group, although there may still be a few. Therefore, more candidates are choosing design options and need to access the appropriate resources material.

### Health and safety

People may groan when they hear these words spoken, but it 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.

## 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 highest performing candidates will include many of these.

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

Candidates need to:

- Understand the space available, (studio, proscenium arch stage, in-the-round, etc).
- Know where the story is located?
- Know where is the audience?
- Know the dimensions available (leads to scale drawing of ground plan) including height, for access.
- Know the equipment available, boxes, furniture, flats, drapes, etc.
- See the ground plan to scale, indicating entrances and exits, positioning of furniture, flats, etc.
- Know the number of scenes required. Are there any changes of scene? Who is affected? How do the scenes get changed?
- Know if it is an interior or exterior location?
- Understand what does the script ask for in terms of setting? Anything?
- Know how many actors on stage and what are their requirements for furniture and props.
- Have a set box with video 'tour' around it and voice-over rationale.
- Explain of 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?
- Understand the practicalities – how the scenery will be moved, by whom, its weight so how many stage hands needed, the time it will take, use of trucks and other devices.
- Have a scale model of the set and scene changes, and if CAD available, a detailed to scale CAD.

### Relevant Websites

<https://dramatics.org/read-render-realize/>

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

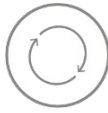
## Lighting (LX)

Candidates need to:

- Know what equipment is available to use and know how to use it to get what they want
- 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 (**g**oes-**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?

### Relevant Websites

Useful blog post from same source as lighting looking at basics.

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



## Most common causes of candidates not passing

### Concept proforma

- Poor focus and the questions have not been addressed.
- Repetition
- Insufficient reference to drama techniques
- Lack of academic rigour for GCSE

### Performance

- Under-rehearsed pieces
- Role not demanding enough to demonstrate a range of skills
- Insufficient exposure/ an extract too short
- Poor selection of extracts preventing a range of skills to be demonstrated
- Poor selection of text with a focus on violence and swearing

## 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

<https://dramatics.org/read-render-realize/>

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

<https://illuminated-integration.com/blog/mccandless-method-stage-lighting/>

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

Glossary in the specification



## Additional comments

The list that follows gives an indication of the range of texts performed by centres in the 2024 series. It is not exhaustive and is just a representative sample.

Remember to submit your choice of text for 2025 to the OCR Text Management Service.

<b><i>Playwright</i></b>	<b><i>Name of text</i></b>
Aron	The Donahue Sisters
Anderson	Blackout
Anouilh	Antigone
Atwood	The Penelopiad
Ayckbourn	House and Garden
Bartlett	Bull
Beckett	Waiting for Godot
Bovell	Things I Know to be True
Briton	The Muddy Choir
Burnell	Human Nurture
Cartwright	Bed
Cartwright	Two
Churchill	Top Girls
Deegan	Daisy Pulls it off
Firth	Neville's Island
Flintoff	The Ballad of Maria Marten
Godber	Bouncers
Godber	Shakers
Godber	Teechers
Golding	Lord of the Flies
Greig	Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
Haddon/Stephens	Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime
Hamilton	The Exam
Holcroft	The Wardrobe
Isitt	The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband
Jones	Stones in his Pockets
Keatley	My Mother Said....
Kelly	DNA
Kelly	Taking Care of Baby
Kneehigh	Hansel and Gretel
La Butte	Reasons to be Pretty
Lansley	Flies
Leigh	Abigail's Party

<b><i>Playwright</i></b>	<b><i>Name of text</i></b>
Lloyd Malcolm	The Wasp
Macmillan	Lungs
Mahfouz	Layla's Room
Mahfouz	A Shop Selling Speech
Mamet	Oleanna
McGuinness	Someone Who'll Watch Over Me
Neilson	The Lying Kind
Norman	Night Mother
Orwell/Wooldridge	Animal Farm
Osborne	Look Back in Anger
Placey	Girls Like That
Potter	Blue Remembered Hills
Priestley	An Inspector Calls
Reza/Hampton	Art
Robbins	The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe
Seaton	Red
Shakespeare	Romeo & Juliet
Shakespeare	Macbeth
Shakespeare	A Midsummer Night's Dream
Smith	Swallow
Sophocles	Antigone
Steinbeck	Of Mice and Men
Stephenson	Five Kinds of Silence
Stoppard	Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead
Teale	Bronte
Wade	Colder Than Here
Wheeller	Hard to Swallow
Wheeller	Too Much Punch for Judy
Whittington	Be My Baby
Wilde	The Importance of Being Earnest
Williams	The Glass Menagerie
Williams	Baby Girl

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# Supporting you

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**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.

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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.

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**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

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## 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](mailto: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

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