

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

DRAMA AND THEATRE

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in
Drama and Theatre

H459

For first teaching in 2016

H459/31 Summer 2025 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 responses 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 [Teach Cambridge](#).

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Paper 31 series overview

Paper 31 – Analysing Performance – is a written examination in which candidates answer three extended-response essay questions. It tests assessment objective AO3 (Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed and performed) and AO4 (Analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others).

In most cases, candidates answered all three extended essay questions. There were a few infringements of the rubric, including one or two cases where candidates answered all the questions on the question paper, irrespective of the play or theme studied. Some candidates chose to answer Section B, Question 7 first and in some cases this meant that the candidate ran out of time and had to write shorter responses for Section A.

Centres are reminded that candidates are not permitted to have access to the performance text in the examination.

Assessment for learning



Practising writing under timed conditions would be helpful for candidates.

In this series, there was a wide range of creative and artistic ideas presented by the candidates, which seemed to reflect familiarity with live theatre. While there will always be a need to encourage candidates to develop their theatrical understanding by visiting live theatre, many centres also provided candidates with the opportunity to experience digital performance work. Those candidates who were given the opportunity to see a live theatre performance, however, were more confident in writing about theatre with enthusiasm and with a strong line of development and theatrical perception. It is recommended that candidates are given the opportunity to experience live performances whenever possible.

Assessment for learning



Centres should provide opportunities for candidates to experience a wider range of performance work whether live or recorded in order to develop a more extensive range of creative ideas and theatrical understanding.

It should be noted that, unlike in H059/05, there is no assessment of spelling, punctuation, grammar and presentation in the marking criteria for this examination paper. There is, however, an expectation that candidates will be able to construct an argument that addresses the questions set, structuring an essay that sets out their argument in a coherent manner, and analysing and evaluating performance work in detail. Almost all candidates were able to structure their written work using paragraphs, introductions and conclusions.

Most candidates wrote fluently and accurately, and scripts generally reflected an acceptable standard of punctuation, grammar and spelling. However, there were several instances where incorrect spelling, inaccurate use of subject terminology, poor punctuation or grammar and illegible handwriting obscured the argument of an essay. Some candidates need further support in writing at GCE level to avoid using colloquialisms that do not reflect academic expectations at GCE.

In some atypical scripts marked, the typing skills of the candidate hindered the coherence of the argument being made. Examiners reported several instances of careless typing that prevented clarity in terms of the candidates' creative ideas being understood clearly. It is important that any candidates submitting their work in this way should have sufficient skill to ensure clarity and it is recommended that centres work on this with their candidates. For atypical scripts, it would be helpful if centres make sure that the candidate uses a double space between each line of text and a suitable size, preferably 14-point, font.

Key point – writing

Centres should ensure that candidates are given the support and guidance required to use subject terminology with accuracy and to demonstrate high levels of spelling, grammar, punctuation and presentation.

Centres should train their candidates to use academic language and avoid using colloquialisms.

Where candidates require special arrangements, centres should consider how to provide support with word processing skills as part of their preparation for the exam.

Candidates are encouraged to present a brief introduction to show their knowledge and understanding of the theatrical context of their answers. There were some very well written introductory paragraphs that reflected the candidates' knowledge and understanding of the context and style of the work. There was also an increase in the use of lengthy introductions to essays this session, with some candidates writing a whole page of introduction. Although the content was often accurate and reflected knowledge and understanding, it was only credited where it had direct impact on the focus of the question. In addressing the question, the emphasis should be on the description, explanation, justification and analysis of how the play might be realised on stage in a live performance. Candidates did not receive credit for writing an in-depth introduction if it distracted from the discussion of their creative and artistic ideas for a live performance of the play they studied.

Key point – introductions and conclusions

Introductions should be short and focused on the question and how the candidate intends to answer it. Conclusions should be kept to a minimum, and candidates do not need to repeat what is covered in the essay.

Assessment for learning



Centres are recommended to work with candidates on crafting the opening of essay questions as part of the learning process, with a focus on immediately engaging with the question and setting out the line of argument, rather than giving context and background information.

Many candidates were able to use technical terminology effectively. For example, in answer to design questions, there were examples of candidates referring to diegetic and non-diegetic sound, and frequent reference to types of lanterns and the use of birdies, gobos, gels and dry ice. Examiners reported that most candidates used these terms in support of performance detail, and that the use of this terminology was helpful when the candidate was fully aware of what is meant and how it adds to the moment on stage. At times, however, these references distracted from the point being made and it is important to realise that they are only required where the question focuses on production elements. Most candidates were able to reference the type of staging being used, where appropriate, although this was used regardless of whether it had an impact on the answer.

Assessment for learning



Centres should continue to develop candidates' knowledge and understanding of technical terminology, production elements and special effects as part of the learning process. However, this should be focused on supporting the content of specific questions.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
- used short introductions to set their argument - gave clear descriptions, explanations and justification of a range of performance and production details - created a clear picture for the examiner - saw themselves in the role of the director/designer/actor, as appropriate - selected appropriate scenes to discuss - selected the most appropriate text for each question - were able to refer to a full range of performance and/or production skills - used subject terminology to support the points being made and fully understood that terminology - had a range of live theatre performance experience to make an informed decision with regard to the question being asked.	- used lengthy introductions that discussed the playwright and context of the play regardless of which question was being answered - gave a vague description and explanation with little or no justification for the one or two performance and production details given - created a confusing picture for the examiner - made decisions about what text to use without considering both questions first - referred to a small number of performance and/or production skills - added in rehearsal techniques because they seemed to think they should - added in references to subject terminology/practitioners because they seemed to think they should - had a limited knowledge and understanding of the text or the characters - had no logical structure to the writing or the essay and hardly referred to the question at all in the answer.

Section A overview

Candidates are required to study two texts from the same thematic list (as outlined in the [specification](#)) and answer two essay questions. There were no examples this series of candidates attempting to write answer on texts not on the specification, although there were a few instances where candidates produced only one essay for Section A. Some candidates did not divide their time appropriately, writing several pages on one of their answers to the detriment of their other answers. This was most noticeable when a candidate answered Question 7 first.

Generally candidates showed a clear knowledge and understanding of the performance texts and their contexts. Candidates are expected to have studied the opening ten minutes of each play chosen and at least three additional scenes from across that play. A definition for each set text as to what constitutes the opening scene is given on pages 64/65 of the specification and centres may find this helpful to refer to when helping candidates to understand what is meant by 'the opening scenes of the play'.

There were many highly developed answers that focused on the opening moments of a set text with creativity and depth of detail. Some candidates attempted to cover more than the required scenes of the play, which was often self-penalising as they struggled to work through a larger number of scenes.

Key point – the need to study the text as a whole

Candidates would find it helpful to have a full knowledge and understanding of the script rather than just the opening ten minutes and an additional three scenes.

Please note that the specification details that centres must study 'at least' three additional scenes.

The selection of scenes can either support or restrict the success of the final essay.

Examiners reported on a few other trends.

- The most successful answers presented a perceptive line of development or argument through a detailed exploration of a few specific moments or points, whereas less successful answers saw attempts to write about the whole of the performance text.
- Some candidates appeared to be reliant on prepared answers rather than applying their knowledge and understanding to the question asked on the examination paper. This was usually obvious to examiners as the candidate could not respond to the specifics of the question. It is important that candidates are prepared to respond to a range of questions.
- There were some examples of candidates discussing in Section A the ideas they had seen in a live performance of their set text, and they directly credited either the actor or the director with the ideas. While the specification encourages candidates to learn from the live theatre which they see, candidates should avoid directly using the ideas used in the production of their set text which they might have seen.
- There was a notable increase in references to practitioners, especially Brecht, Berkoff, Frantic Assembly, Le Coq and Stanislavski. Occasionally rehearsal techniques were mentioned as supportive of a specific moment on stage, and this was credited by examiners. In most cases, however, candidates would have been better off limiting such references as none of the questions on the examination paper required discussion of rehearsal techniques.

Key point – avoid unnecessary reference to practitioners

Candidates should only refer to a practitioner when relevant to the question or where the use of a practitioner's work will add to the line of development or argument being presented.

Candidates need to engage, understand and enjoy the text they are studying. Candidates write creatively and perceptively about scripts which they have enjoyed reading and can see themselves directing or performing the work on stage as a live performance. Examiners credited candidates for expressing their creative and theatrical ideas through the play and so ensuring that candidates engage with the scripts chosen and the theme, context, characters, relationships and action is a priority.

Candidates do well when they understand the question and when they construct a line of development or argument for that question. At the very least this creates a plan or structure for the work. There is some evidence of candidates creating plans for the work and these are generally short and focused which is effective. With some atypical scripts, candidates do sometimes produce longer plans.

Key point – use of introductions and conclusions

There is no requirement for an introduction to the text, its history or the background of the playwright or performance of the work.

It is recommended that candidates avoid lengthy introductions which do not focus on the question.

Most answers seen responded to the question in terms of theatrical live performance work and there was little evidence of candidates focusing on the plays in terms of a literary discussion, which has been a significant issue in previous series.

As with all questions, credit is given to any references to practical interpretation of the play and candidates are expected to explain what the character was doing and how they were seen to do it. Most candidates were able to apply their knowledge and understanding of their set text directly but there is always a need for centres to focus on the practical interpretation of the texts.

Assessment for learning



When working with candidates in preparation for this exam – candidates must be encouraged at all times to consider the picture they are painting for the examiner.

A centre, when marking work, should ask themselves:

- can they see clearly what the candidate is trying to achieve on stage?
- will it work effectively as a theatrical performance?

The marking grid should be applied with this in mind during any centre-based assessment.

Question 1

Theme 1: Conflict

Use **one** performance text in your answer to **each** question.

Use a **different** performance text for **each** question.

Write the name of the performance text you have studied at the start of each answer.

Black Watch – Gregory Burke

Hamlet – William Shakespeare

Necessary Targets – Eve Ensler

Oh! What a Lovely War – Joan Littlewood

The Long and the Short and the Tall – Willis Hall

- 1 Select a character from the play you have studied. As an actor, how would you vary your pacing to show conflicts in that character's mind?

Refer to at least **three** scenes to support your answer.

[15]

This question required the candidate to take on the role of the actor and to consider in depth the ways that pace could be varied in performance.

Most candidates referred to *Necessary Targets* and the inner struggles of either of the main characters with some using *Black Watch*. There were some examples of the use of *The Long and the Short and the Tall* and *Hamlet* but overall the other two texts were more often chosen for this theme.

Most candidates were able to explore and understand the idea of conflict in the mind of the character and this was generally referred to as inner conflict. The relationship between pace and conflict in the mind, and the more subtle nuances that this requires from the actor, was explored in some work and some candidates were given marks in Level 5 when they were able to discuss this in depth and demonstrate a theatrical understanding. These candidates moved beyond simply discussing how the actor changed the speed of their vocal delivery at specific moments and discussed why this might happen, what it might show and other more subtle indicators of pace which might be used.

Most responses were practical in their approach although there were answers that focused on the play and the inner conflicts experienced by the character rather than on practical interpretation of this inner conflict on stage. It is the practical performance ideas and interpretation which is required in this qualification. Centres are reminded that candidates are writing about a practical subject and therefore the response should focus on describing a practical outcome.

Many candidates talked only about the pace of the voice of the actor. Some candidates were able to discuss how silence and pauses could be used, which is clearly pace. It should be noted that skills such as facial expression, gesture, movement, eye contact and even posture can be related to the idea of pace.

One of the main issues here was that candidates saw pace only in the sense of a vocal technique and there was a focus on what was said and how it was said in terms of speed. When candidates struggled to find more to write about, the essay often lost its way and candidates would then start to write about other performance skills and techniques which they were not able to relate to pace.

Question 2

- 2 As a set designer, how would you create opportunities for the actors to bring out conflicts in the drama in the play you have studied?

Refer to the **opening** scenes to support your answer.

[15]

Candidates were expected to discuss their ideas for the set design in their chosen production, and it was clear from most answers that candidates had been well prepared to discuss such choices.

The question was generally answered well, and many candidates were able to explain the type of staging that they wanted, and most chose to move away from the traditional use of a proscenium arch and used thrust, in-the-round or traverse staging, showing a range of knowledge and an understanding of the implications for set design and use of the space for each stage type.

Most answers were able to focus on the use of set design to emphasise the conflicts identified within the plays studied and candidates dealt with this effectively and were able to describe and analyse the actors' use of the set and stage space to enhance specific moments from the text.

Most candidates referred to *Black Watch* or *Oh! What A Lovely War* when answering this question, with a few using *Hamlet*. In *Black Watch* the conflict seen was between the reporter and the soldiers, in *Oh! What A Lovely War*, the focus in terms of conflict was generally between the soldiers and the officers, and in *Hamlet* between the prince and his mother.

Question 3

Theme 2: Family Dynamics

Use **one** performance text in your answer to **each** question.

Use a **different** performance text for **each** question.

Write the name of the performance text you have studied at the start of each answer.

A Day in the Death of Joe Egg – Peter Nichols

King Lear – William Shakespeare

Live Like Pigs – John Arden

The Caucasian Chalk Circle – Bertolt Brecht

The House of Bernarda Alba – Federico García Lorca

- 3 As a director, how would you balance the tensions between characters in the **opening** scene or scenes of the play you have studied? [15]

The focus of the question is on the role of the director in balancing the tensions between the characters within the play and how these relationships reflect tension. There was a lack of reference to the director in many answers which impeded the quality of the overall response.

All texts were equally popular, although fewer candidates answered on *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* than in previous series. There were some developed and detailed responses in which candidates were coherent and consistent in their understanding of the relationships and tension within the family dynamics shown. Essays on the opening of *King Lear* were particularly strong, and candidates were very clear on the relationships between Lear and his court and Lear and his three daughters. The work here was often detailed, referencing both performance and production skills and techniques that a director might employ.

Some candidates focused more on the characterisation of the different members of the families from the text, but generally candidates were able to apply this knowledge and understanding to the idea of tension being created because of the characterisation. This applied to some of the stronger scripts which chose to discuss the role of Bernarda Alba or *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. Some higher scoring candidates understood that the tension between characters is not always negative and were able to discuss the relationship, for example, between Grusha and baby Michael.

Some candidates got rather tied up in the discussion of 'balance' in an attempt to address the question and this was particularly clear in both *King Lear*, in terms of the balance between the daughters and their different reactions to his ultimatum, and *A Day in the Death of Joe Egg* with the discussion of differences between Sheila and Bri. Examiners were able to credit this knowledge and understanding where appropriate as well as crediting work which, while not discussing the idea of balance, did demonstrate a full understanding of the different tensions at different times within the play studied.

Exemplar 1

		Tension would first be created by Poncia, the head maid of the household, and the Maid discuss Bernarda's tyranny. They create tension for Bernarda's imminent entrance. As Poncia delivers the line, 'She - the most immaculate - the most decent. She - the most superior. Her poor husband has earned a good rest.', I would have her gesture centre stage with the Maid ^{use of levels} sat on the floor in front of her. This would show that, while Poncia and the Maid have some camaraderie in hating Bernarda, Poncia
		^{The actress of} is of higher status. Poncia would deliver this line savagely with an angry tone and an upright posture. She would emphasise each time she says 'she' by raising her volume as though any mention of Bernarda, even not by name, causes her anger. On her last sentence, she would nod briskly as though agreeing emphatically with her own point, emphasising her dislike for Bernarda. The actresses of

This exemplar shows an excellent knowledge and understanding of the text and the context of the play, focusing on the relationship and tensions between the maid and Poncia in *The House of Bernarda Alba* and this sets the tone for the rest of the essay. The work is coherently structured, demonstrating clear knowledge and understanding of the characters, their roles within the household and status through an exploration of a range of performance skills. While there is no direct reference within the paragraph to the director's role in balancing the tensions, it is indirectly implied. Clearly, the candidate is discussing what they would want to see on stage in a live performance and this would be seen as a Level 5 response.

Question 4

- 4 Select a character from the play you have studied. As an actor, how would you perform this role to help build dramatic tension within the family?

Refer to at least **three** scenes to support your answer.

[15]

The focus of this question is on one character from the text studied. Work seen showed a good understanding of the text, the family dynamics and the tensions. Most candidates found this question accessible and were able to answer with references to one or more characters. Some candidates found it difficult to talk as though they were playing the role as the actor. Some referenced rehearsal techniques here to show how they might prepare for specific moments in the performance.

Candidates quite rightly focused on the dramatic tension which was created by their chosen character, and this was something that engaged the family dynamics which had clearly been explored in preparation by the centre. The most successful answers articulated how the interplay between characters deepened the sense of conflict within the narrative, drawing on both textual evidence and an awareness of the emotional stakes involved. This consideration often led to insightful analyses of pivotal moments, where the balance of power shifted subtly through gestures, tone and staging choices. The more successful responses did not merely recount events, but delved into the motivations underlying the familial discord, often referencing the broader social or historical context to enrich their interpretations.

Those tensions were explored using a range of performance skills. Candidates were able to describe how they would use a range of skills to demonstrate or create the tensions within specific moments. Overall, the discussion of skills used was effective and clear. Candidates can describe what they would do and how they would do it following this with an explanation of why they would do this and in some instances using direct references from the scenes to support their decisions.

Question 5

Theme 3: Heroes and Villains

Use **one** performance text in your answer to **each** question.

Use a **different** performance text for **each** question.

Write the name of the performance text you have studied at the start of each answer.

Amadeus – Peter Shaffer

Caligula – Albert Camus

Frankenstein – Nick Dear

Othello – William Shakespeare

The Love of the Nightingale – Timberlake Wertenbaker

- 5 What design elements would you use to create a sinister atmosphere in the **opening** scenes of the play you have studied? [15]

As in previous series, this was a popular theme, with *Frankenstein* and *Amadeus* emerging as the two most popular performance texts.

Some candidates gave original and creative ideas, which were supported with detailed explanations that created an appropriate picture for the examiner. There were also examples where the ideas did not explore the sinister atmosphere of the opening scenes. Indeed, some of the suggestions did not seem likely to create a sinister atmosphere at all, and the points made would not support what the candidate claimed they were trying to do. These scripts were all marked positively and examiners considered the theatricality of an idea as well as how it related to the question. For example, a bright orange sunset in the opening scene of *Frankenstein* might not be the obvious choice when trying to create a sinister atmosphere but it would depend on the candidate's explanation.

Often candidates relied on what they had seen and found it difficult to make their ideas clear because they did not think the work through or engage with the work using their own knowledge and understanding of theatre and theatrical conventions. As a result, these essays tended to be general rather than detailed.

Some candidates created the idea of very large set designs, and while there are no restrictions in terms of ideas, certain set design ideas would restrict sightlines for the audience. Unworkable designs stem partly from a lack of experience of theatre and staging, and this is a reason why candidates need to experience live theatre in order to understand such concepts as blocking and use of the stage space. Some candidates discussed the use of in-the-round or traverse staging, but the nuances as to how these spaces work in terms of design elements were often lacking in their responses.

Many candidates were able to engage with the use of subject-specific terminology in this answer, referring to lighting and the implications of intensity and direction. Some discussions of lighting were seen to be highly technical and detailed, but candidates should be encouraged to see this as one of several techniques that could be used to create the on-stage atmosphere in any play.

Question 6

- 6 As an actor playing a character with villainous qualities, what acting skills would you use to make the character likeable **or** dislikeable to the audience?

Refer to at least **three** scenes to support your answer.

[15]

This question was answered well by many candidates with some particularly strong answers using Tereus from *The Love of the Nightingale* and Iago from *Othello*.

Candidates did best when they focused on specific ideas for the interpretation of the role, which they could describe and explain in detail and with clarity. The question focuses on the use of performance skills and techniques such as facial expression, body language, voice, movement and gesture and candidates did well when they were able to describe and explain what they would do at specific moments within three scenes from the play.

Candidates were able to identify whether the character they had chosen was likeable or dislikeable although some candidates took this further and suggested that the character they had chosen to discuss could be considered to be either/both. This related specifically to the Creature in *Frankenstein* and Iago, where some candidates argued that he could have been seen as either, at different times in the play. However, this discussion was not a requirement of the question and tended to overcomplicate the argument presented. Such essays were not particularly focused or strong.

Candidates referred to a developed range of performance skills. There were some examples where candidates talked about production elements rather than focusing on performance skills but this was not required for this question. Interaction of the character with production elements might be appropriate if used to demonstrate the role at a specific moment, such as Iago interacting with Desdemona's handkerchief.

Exemplar 2

Within the opening scene of Frankenstein I aim to portray Victor's complexity and villainous characteristics to create distance from the audience. As Victor awaits the awakening of the creature I would pace frantically from centre stage left to right. Posture folded, head low to convey his regret and anticipation. I would have furrowed brows and perched lips again to reinforce he's deep in thought. Then as the creature awakens, I would ~~have~~ ~~step~~ step away slowly and reluctantly. My facial expression serene and bland to convey that this moment is pivotal for his science, yet the weight of creating this creature is heavy. As the creature begins to move and groan, I would riden my posture straight, stand feet shoulder's length apart. My face still serene with guilt and fascination, my hands grasps tightly behind my back. This creates suspicion from the audience, that Victor will not take responsibility, making him distillable.

This exemplar shows an excellent knowledge and understanding of the text and the context of the play. The work is well structured and coherent with clear knowledge and understanding of the character and effective performance details. The focus is on how the actor might use a range of performance skills, explaining how and why these are used on stage with direct reference to the context. This would be a Level 5 response. While written very simply, the answer is clear and fully effective, demonstrating the acting skills with coherency and detail.

Section B overview

Candidates in this section are required to have seen a live theatre performance. Details on the performances which can be analysed and evaluated for this component can be found in the [specification](#). Candidates must watch this performance during the course of their A Level study.

At the start of their response, candidates must provide the name of the performance, the venue and the date (month and year) the performance was seen. Most candidates helpfully identified whether the performance was seen digitally or live and introduced the performance as part of their opening section. It should be remembered that as with Section A essays, candidates who wrote a lengthy introduction and gave details of the production often ran the risk of wasting time and should be encouraged to keep the information short. All that is required is for candidates to state what they saw, when and where. Centres are reminded that, without the performance details, work would not meet the assessment criteria within the marking grid for Section B. The marking grid clearly states that for all levels candidates must demonstrate '...analysis of creative and artistic choices...'. A clear description of what those choices were is necessary for the examiner to understand and credit the analysis, explanation and evaluation of those choices.

Examples of performances seen this year included *Metamorphosis*, *Animal Farm*, *Taste of Honey*, *After Life*, *And Then There Were None*, *The Kite Runner*, *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, *Hamilton*, *War Horse*, *Les Misérables*, *Peter Pan Goes Wrong*, *An Inspector Calls*, *Dracula*, *Macbeth*, *Wonderboy*, *1984*, *The Lion*, *The Witch and The Wardrobe*, *Possibilities*, *Small Island*, *2:22 A Ghost Story*, *Ocean At The End Of The Lane*, *Things I Know To Be True*, *Frankenstein* and *A View From The Bridge*.

Some candidates chose to write about a production of a text that they had studied for Section A. While there are no restrictions about this, it is not advisable as it might lead candidates into repeating material they have used elsewhere.

Candidates who wrote clear, structured essays that discussed what had happened on stage in performance did well. However, there were some examples of candidates who were clearly able to write effectively with a detailed understanding of the performance they saw, producing effective analytical essays but did not go into sufficient performance detail. There were some examples where no performance detail was given at all, and the candidate did not create a clear picture of the performance for the examiner.

Key point – the need for detailed descriptions of what was seen on stage

When describing performance work, the candidate must work to create a detailed picture for the examiner of specific moments within the text.

It is understandable that centres would take their candidates to see a production of the text they are studying but it is not helpful in the development of candidates' knowledge and understanding of theatrical conventions and techniques if this is the only performance they have seen.

Key point – centres should choose carefully live performance work studied

It is recommended that candidates answer on a performance of a text which is not one of their chosen texts for Section A.

Question 7*

7* Consider the range of design elements in the live production you have seen.

Explain how these created opportunities for the actors to bring out their character or characters to maximum dramatic effect. **[30]**

A range of answers were seen in response to the question on live performance this year. The question required the candidates to discuss the design elements used within a performance they had seen. Approximately half of the candidates had been given the opportunity to see a live performance and others gained knowledge through access to digital theatre. This was clear from the information provided by candidates in their introductions.

Most candidates were capable of analysing the creative choices made in terms of the design elements. Many gave very confident and coherent descriptions of what they saw and were able to explain the effect of the design element. However, there were some candidates who did not pay attention to the need to explain how design elements created opportunities for the actors to bring out character. Some candidates took note of the whole question but did not explore this fully and ended up making general comments about the staging and how a simple stage would let the audience focus on the acting. In some instances, this was because performances had been seen that took a minimalistic approach to the play and therefore had limited production or design elements to refer to. This emphasises the fact that centres should provide candidates with a range of live performance experiences to have a choice when faced with the question in the exam. It would be useful to include such decisions as to which live performance fits certain types of questions posed.

Candidates who produced perceptive and highly developed work at Level 5 explained clearly the design elements used, and then went on to analyse how this helped the actor on stage. Some candidates were able to make the link with the actor's portrayal of their character or characters and therefore were rewarded with marks at the higher end of Level 5.

Exemplar 3

		The use of Proxemics in this play is also important in creating opportunities for the characters actors, such as when Pip sends a letter to Fran, confronting her for her mistreatment of Pip as a daughter. For example, both actors sit at the same table despite, in reality, being in separate countries. This immediately ^{effectively} evokes a feeling of confrontation^{and distance} in audiences as Pip details how Fran's treatment of her has negatively affected her on views towards her own daughters. Furthermore, the close proximity allows for the actress playing Pip to hold intense eye contact with Fran, with her head tilted forward with stern eyebrows, whilst Fran the instead keeps her eyes down, mouth open and wide eyes, a look of worry and regret. This is highly the proxemics ^{and distance} This further adds to the feeling of confrontation, whilst also the reflecting to audiences the tense mother-daughter relationships that work on on generational trauma & lookism. Thus The use of proxemics are therefore highly effective in this moment in allowing a raw & honest confrontation between a mother and daughter which the actors utilise exceptionally.
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In this exemplar the candidate provides brief reference to the design elements which are the table, the letter and the use of space and then explains how these helped the actor present the character within the scene and the mother/daughter relationship.

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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 the exam paper builder platform for a range of our qualifications. [Find out more](#).

Free for all OCR centres with an Interchange account, it allows unlimited users per centre. We require an [Interchange](#) username to verify your centre's users for ExamBuilder.

If you do not have an Interchange account, please contact your centre administrator (usually the Exams Officer) to request a username.

Once you have an Interchange username, use the form on [this page](#) to sign up for ExamBuilder, or ask an existing user at your centre to create an ExamBuilder account for you.

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](#).

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 the link to the **Online courses** under the **Assessment** or **Training** tab – hover over **Assessment** or **Training** on the horizontal menu and select **Online courses** from the dropdown.

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?

We recommend all teachers complete the module on Online courses – NEA for their subject. These courses provide subject-specific information about course content; how to prepare for planning, marking and submitting; and support with understanding the marking criteria.

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.

Tell us what you think

Your feedback plays an important role in how we develop, market, support and resource qualifications now and into the future. We want you and your students to enjoy and get the best out of our qualifications and resources, but to do that we need your honest opinions to tell us whether we're on the right track or not.

You can email your thoughts to resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk or visit our [feedback page](#) to learn more about how you can help us improve our resources.



Designing and testing in [collaboration with you](#) and your students



Helping young people develop an [ethical view of the world](#)



Equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDIB) are [part of everything we do](#)

Contact the team at:

☎ 01223 553998

🖥 ocr.org.uk

To stay up to date with all the relevant news about our qualifications, register for email updates at ocr.org.uk/updates

Visit our Online Support Centre at support.ocr.org.uk



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