

GCE

Drama and Theatre

**H459/45: Deconstructing texts for performance: Sweeney
Todd: Demon Barber of Fleet Street**

A Level

Mark Scheme for June 2025

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This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and students, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which marks were awarded by examiners. It does not indicate the details of the discussions which took place at an examiners' meeting before marking commenced.

All examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and the report on the examination.

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MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

PREPARATION FOR MARKING RM ASSESSOR

1. Make sure that you have accessed and completed the relevant training packages for on-screen marking: *RM Assessor Online Training: OCR Essential Guide to Marking*.
2. Make sure that you have read and understood the mark scheme and the question paper for this unit. These are available in RM Assessor
3. Log-in to RM Assessor and mark the **required number** of practice responses (“scripts”) and the **required number** of standardisation responses.

MARKING

1. Mark strictly to the mark scheme.
2. Marks awarded must relate directly to the marking criteria.
3. The schedule of dates is very important. It is essential that you meet the RM Assessor 50% and 100% (traditional 40% Batch 1 and 100% Batch 2) deadlines. If you experience problems, you must contact your Team Leader (Supervisor) without delay.
4. If you are in any doubt about applying the mark scheme, consult your Team Leader by telephone, email or via the RM Assessor messaging system.
5. **Crossed-Out Responses**
Where a candidate has crossed out a response and provided a clear alternative then the crossed-out response is not marked. Where no alternative response has been provided, examiners may give candidates the benefit of the doubt and mark the crossed-out response where legible.

Rubric Error Responses – Optional Questions

Where candidates have a choice of question across a whole paper or a whole section and have provided more answers than required, then all responses are marked and the highest mark allowable within the rubric is given. Enter a mark for each question answered into RM Assessor, which will select the highest mark from those awarded. (*The underlying assumption is that the candidate has penalised themselves by attempting more questions than necessary in the time allowed.*)

Multiple-Choice Question Responses

When a multiple-choice question has only a single, correct response and a candidate provides two responses (even if one of these responses is correct), then no mark should be awarded (as it is not possible to determine which was the first response selected by the candidate).

When a question requires candidates to select more than one option/multiple options, then local marking arrangements need to ensure consistency of approach.

Contradictory Responses

When a candidate provides contradictory responses, then no mark should be awarded, even if one of the answers is correct.

Short Answer Questions (requiring only a list by way of a response, usually worth only one mark per response)

Where candidates are required to provide a set number of short answer responses then only the set number of responses should be marked. The response space should be marked from left to right on each line and then line by line until the required number of responses have been considered. The remaining responses should not then be marked. Examiners will have to apply judgement as to whether a 'second response' on a line is a development of the 'first response', rather than a separate, discrete response. *(The underlying assumption is that the candidate is attempting to hedge their bets and therefore getting undue benefit rather than engaging with the question and giving the most relevant/correct responses.)*

Short Answer Questions (requiring a more developed response, worth two or more marks)

If the candidates are required to provide a description of, say, three items or factors and four items or factors are provided, then mark on a similar basis – that is downwards (as it is unlikely in this situation that a candidate will provide more than one response in each section of the response space).

Longer Answer Questions (requiring a developed response)

Where candidates have provided two (or more) responses to a medium or high tariff question which only required a single (developed) response and not crossed out the first response, then only the first response should be marked. Examiners will need to apply professional judgement as to whether the second (or a subsequent) response is a 'new start' or simply a poorly expressed continuation of the first response.

6. Always check the pages (and additional objects if present) at the end of the response in case any answers have been continued there. If the candidate has continued an answer there, then add the annotation 'SEEN' to confirm that the work has been seen and mark any responses using the annotations in section 11.
7. There is a NR (**No Response**) option. Award NR (No Response):
 - if there is nothing written at all in the answer space
 - OR if there is a comment which does not in any way relate to the question (e.g., 'can't do', 'don't know')

- OR if there is a mark (e.g., a dash, a question mark) which is not an attempt at the question.

Note: Award 0 marks – for an attempt that earns no credit (including copying out the question).

- The RM Assessor **comments box** is used by your Team Leader to explain the marking of the practice responses. Please refer to these comments when checking your practice responses. **Do not use the comments box for any other reason.**
- Assistant Examiners will send a brief report on the performance of candidates to their Team Leader (Supervisor) via email by the end of the marking period. The report should contain notes on particular strengths displayed as well as common errors or weaknesses. Constructive criticism of the question paper/mark scheme is also appreciated.
- For answers marked by levels of response: Not applicable in F501
To determine the level – start at the highest level and work down until you reach the level that matches the answer
To determine the mark within the level, consider the following

Descriptor	Award mark
On the borderline of this level and the one below	At bottom of level
Just enough achievement on balance for this level	Above bottom and either below middle or at middle of level (depending on number of marks available)
Meets the criteria but with some slight inconsistency	Above middle and either below top of level or at middle of level (depending on number of marks available)
Consistently meets the criteria for this level	At top of level

6. Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
	Blank page
	Unclear
	Just/Justification
	Knowledge
	Knowledge and understanding
	Not answered question
	Poorly expressed
	Repetition
	Tick
	Relating to question
	Expandable vertical wavy line
	Odd or incorrect grammar
	Vague
	Effective evaluation
	Point being made

12. Subject-specific Marking Instructions

INTRODUCTION

Your first task as an Examiner is to become thoroughly familiar with the material on which the examination depends. This material includes:

- the specification, especially the assessment objectives
- the performance text(s) which candidates have studied
- the question paper and its rubrics
- the mark scheme.

You should ensure that you have copies of these materials.

You should ensure also that you are familiar with the administrative procedures related to the marking process. These are set out in the OCR booklet **Instructions for Examiners**. If you are examining for the first time, please read carefully **Appendix 5 Introduction to Script Marking: Notes for New Examiners**.

Please ask for help or guidance whenever you need it. Your first point of contact is your Team Leader.

USING THE MARK SCHEME

Please study this Mark Scheme carefully. The Mark Scheme is an integral part of the process that begins with the setting of the question paper and ends with the awarding of grades. Question papers and Mark Schemes are developed in association with each other so that issues of differentiation and positive achievement can be addressed from the very start.

This Mark Scheme is a working document; it is not exhaustive; it does not provide 'correct' answers. The Mark Scheme can only provide 'best guesses' about how the question will work out, and it is subject to revision after we have looked at a wide range of scripts.

The Examiners' Standardisation Meeting will ensure that the Mark Scheme covers the range of candidates' responses to the questions, and that all Examiners understand and apply the Mark Scheme in the same way. The Mark Scheme will be discussed and amended at the meeting, and administrative procedures will be confirmed. Coordination scripts will be issued at the meeting to exemplify aspects of candidates' responses and achievements; the coordination scripts then become part of this Mark Scheme.

Before the Standardisation Meeting, you should read and mark in pencil a number of scripts, in order to gain an impression of the range of responses and achievement that may be expected. **In your marking, you will encounter valid responses which are not covered by the Mark Scheme: these responses must be credited.** You will encounter answers which fall outside the 'target range' of levels for the paper which you are marking. Please mark these answers according to the marking criteria.

Please read carefully all the scripts in your allocation and make every effort to look positively for achievement throughout the ability range. Always be prepared to use the full range of marks.

INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR EXAMINERS

- 1 The coordination scripts provide you with *examples* of the standard of each band. The marks awarded for these scripts will have been agreed by the Team Leaders and will be discussed fully at the Examiners' Coordination Meeting.
- 2 The specific task-related indicative content for each question will help you to understand how the band descriptors may be applied. However, this indicative content does not constitute the mark scheme: it is material that candidates might use, grouped according to each assessment objective tested by the question. It is hoped that candidates will respond to questions in a variety of ways. Rigid demands for 'what must be a good answer' would lead to a distorted assessment. THE INDICATIVE CONTENT FOR EACH TASK provides an indication of what candidates are likely to cover. **The notes are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive:** candidates should be rewarded for any relevant response which appropriately addresses the Assessment Objectives.
- 3 Candidates' answers must be relevant to the question. Beware of prepared answers that do not show the candidate's thought and which have not been adapted to the thrust of the question. Beware also of answers where candidates attempt to reproduce interpretations and concepts that they have been taught but have only partially understood.

Level Descriptors

Each question is worth **30** marks.

This paper will assess **AO3**: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed and performed.

Level 5: 25–30 marks	Excellent and highly developed references to any theatrical processes or practices, used in the role of a director, involved with interpreting and performing theatre. Excellent and highly developed demonstration of how a director's creative and artistic choices can influence how meaning is communicated to an audience. Excellent and highly developed understanding of how the performance text has been constructed and can be performed. Excellent and highly developed understanding of how the social, cultural, historical context of the performance text can affect how the performance text is interpreted and performed for an audience.
Level 4: 19–24 marks	Confident reference to any theatrical processes or practices, used in the role of a director, involved with interpreting and performing theatre. Confident demonstration of how a director's creative and artistic choices can influence how meaning is communicated to an audience. Confident understanding of how the performance text has been constructed and can be performed. Confident understanding of how the social, cultural, historical context of the performance text can affect how the performance text is interpreted and performed for an audience.
Level 3: 13–18 marks	Clear reference to any theatrical processes or practices, used in the role of a director, involved with interpreting and performing theatre. Clear demonstration of how a director's creative and artistic choices can influence how meaning is communicated to an audience. Clear understanding of how the performance text has been constructed and can be performed. Clear understanding of how the social, cultural, historical context of the performance text can affect how the performance text is interpreted and performed for an audience.

Level 2: 7–12 marks	Basic reference to any theatrical processes or practices, used in the role of a director, involved with interpreting and performing theatre. Basic demonstration of how a director's creative and artistic choices can influence how meaning is communicated to an audience. Basic understanding of how the performance text has been constructed and can be performed. Basic understanding of how the social, cultural, historical context of the performance text can affect how the performance text is interpreted and performed for an audience
Level 1: 1–6 marks	Limited reference to any theatrical processes or practices, used in the role of a director, involved with interpreting and performing theatre. Limited demonstration of how a director's creative and artistic choices can influence how meaning is communicated to an audience. Limited understanding of how the performance text has been constructed and can be performed. Limited understanding of how the social, cultural, historical context of the performance text can affect how the performance text is interpreted and performed for an audience.
0 marks	No response or no response worthy of any credit

Question	Answer	Mark	Guidance
1	As a director, describe and justify your vision for directing the actors in this extract to create atmosphere and mood. Annotate the script to show how you would do this. This question asks the candidates to consider. ☐ Their knowledge and understanding of the extract and the musical as a whole. ☐ Their role as a director and the methods and techniques they would use in terms of acting, movement, physicality, character relationships, use of voice, lighting, set, costume, sound and music. ☐ How the text / score has been constructed and how it will be directed. ☐ The actors and how the directorial methods and techniques are used in order to create atmosphere and mood. ☐ The playwright's intentions in terms of narrative arc, the character's journey and structure. ☐ Knowledge and understanding of the original performance context or the social, cultural and historical context.	30	30 (AO3) Candidates will give a description of their intended ideas on how to create atmosphere and mood for the extract, with ideas on how this extract effects the rest of the musical. They will explain how the extract is important in terms of plot, structure and character seen in order to create atmosphere and mood. Candidates will explore the whole musical and how they can highlight the importance of the atmosphere in this extract. Candidates may refer to atmosphere and mood as separate entities or combine them in their response, both are equally valid responses. Good answers will explore a full range of directing skills in order to convey significance including staging, character relationships, voice, objectives and actions, movement, lighting, sound, music, set and staging. Candidates will annotate the script to highlight the contrast in atmosphere and mood of the scene and how they would use different techniques to show this to the audience. Good answers will examine the musical as a whole and the relationships that develop through the musical, focussing on characterisation and how it determines atmosphere.

Question	Answer	Mark	Guidance
			Reference to the social, cultural and historic elements will develop candidate's responses. Candidates should highlight specific moments where, as directors, they would explore the character's relationships, subtext and how to use voice, movement and staging so as to have an effect on the audience. This indicative content is intended to indicate aspects of questions that may feature in candidates' answers. It is not prescriptive, nor is it exclusive; examiners must be careful to reward original but well-focused answers and implicit as well as explicit responses to questions. This guidance should be used in conjunction with the Level Descriptors.

Question	Answer	Mark	Guidance
2	As a director, explain and justify how you could stage a performance of <i>Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street</i> to emphasise the key dramatic moments of the musical. This question asks the candidates to consider. ☐ An understanding of the role of director in relation to the key moments of the musical. ☐ The structure of the musical, how it is constructed. ☐ The director's vision for the design and its potential impact. ☐ The creative and artistic choices which the director will need to make. ☐ The staging techniques used by the director. ☐ The performance text / score and how it could be staged in a production to integrate the key dramatic moments. ☐ What the stage space will be and where the audience is. ☐ The creative and artistic choices which the director will need to make - how as directors they would use all the tools at their disposal.	30	(AO3) Staging can cover the following aspects: stage style, stage space, the actors, setting, using language, movement, voice, mise-en-scene, lighting, sound, levels, costume, makeup, special effects, video and physical theatre elements. Candidates can explain and justify any of these within their answer. Candidates may focus on any of the above areas and how they might reflect key element of the social, cultural and historical context in their direction. References to the social, cultural and historic element of the musical and how they determine the key moments are to be rewarded. Comments on staging, mise-en-scene and character movement may all reflect how the candidate would shape the performance. Candidates may well opt for answers that reflect a combination of physical theatre, use of props, lighting, sound, masks, special effects. Answers in the higher bands will justify their use in depth. Higher band candidates may identify the differences in staging scenes and locations using directorial techniques to clarify different perceptions of events for the characters.

Question	Answer	Mark	Guidance
	☐ The playwright's intentions and original performance context. ☐ The social, cultural and historical context of the musical.		Good answers will highlight how specific rehearsal and directorial techniques have been used to stage the performance. Answers might cover a blend of traditional book musical techniques with Sondheim vocal extravagance. Candidates may well opt for answers that reflect a combination of physical techniques, use of props, lighting, sound, costume, special effects. Answers in the higher bands will justify their use in depth. Higher band candidates may identify the differences in staging scenes and locations using directorial techniques to clarify different perceptions of events for the characters. The use of the elaborate staging to recreate the barber / pie shop may also be explored by higher band candidates. Knowledge and understanding of Sondheim's style should be credited and candidates might explore this in relation to the staging of a classic / contemporary production. Good answers will highlight specific scenes in detail to help explain their staging of the performance text from one setting to the next. Throughout this, candidates will explain and justify the characters and where they will be positioned. Good answers may consider

Question	Answer	Mark	Guidance
			proxemics and how close/far apart characters should stand and be aware of how to use this to create effect when moving settings. This indicative content is intended to indicate aspects of questions that may feature in candidates' answers. It is not prescriptive, nor is it exclusive; examiners must be careful to reward original but well-focused answers and implicit as well as explicit responses to questions. This guidance should be used in conjunction with the Level Descriptors

THE DIRECTOR: Guidance to examiners

1. *'All good directors employ everything in the toolbox – story, characters, editing, lighting, costume, music, set design, action, special effects and psychology'*. by Christopher Vogler, Hollywood script doctor on **film** directors.
2. There are no b/w answers on a directorial approach.
We all think we know what a director does. And should do.
3. **Responsible** for overall vision, direction, purpose, imagining, interpreting, shaping and guiding a production.
4. Working **with** design, costume, lights, effects, props, venues, stage management and of course, with performers.
5. **Staging**, presenting, bringing it to an audience.
6. **Deconstructing** a text to explore, experiment, reinvent and convey meanings.
7. **Filling the space with magic** on proscenium, thrust, traverse, in round, black box, site specific, a street or unusual spaces.
8. It's being **all things to all people**, in a sense.
9. Most responses will relate to conventional theatre staging and traditional directing – moving, blocking, props
BUT WE MAY GET SOMETHING DIFFERENT!
10. **Our test is always and only AO3 – demonstrate k/u of how drama and theatre is developed and performed. THAT'S ALL.**
11. Many centres will study **practitioners** and directors (they should).
Candidates should reference them. Brecht and Stanislavski most popular.
Artaud maybe, in Sweeney Todd.
Frantic Assembly may be referenced in Stockholm.
Other directors? Katie Mitchell?
12. Practitioners should be helpful in terms of training them, provided they grasp and can show how he/she shaped their thinking informed their learning but not slavishly copied.

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