

Examiners' report

CAMBRIDGE TECHNICALS LEVEL 3 (2016)

PERFORMING ARTS

**OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical
in Performing Arts**

Certificate: 05850

Extended Certificate: 05851

Foundation Diploma: 05852

Diploma: 05853

Extended Diploma: 05876

Unit 3 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. 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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Unit 3 series overview

This unit provides candidates with an opportunity to demonstrate a thorough understanding of influential performing arts practitioners and the ways in which they have shaped both creative work and working practices within the industry.

Candidates are given the freedom to select any practitioner of their choice. However, the most effective responses typically focus on a practitioner closely aligned with the candidate's specific area of study within the performing arts. This allows for a deeper, more meaningful exploration of the practitioner's relevance and impact. In many cases, candidates who chose a practitioner previously studied as part of an earlier unit were able to draw on prior knowledge and analysis, resulting in richer, more informed responses.

The assessment is divided into two equally weighted components:

1. a written report
2. a practical demonstration

Both elements must be produced in response to a statement provided at the start of each assessment series (see Question 1). This statement acts as a thematic prompt and is designed to provoke critical thinking and interpretation and may be interpreted in a very broad manner. Centres are reminded that there is no single correct way to interpret the statement. Instead, candidates are expected to engage with it in a way that reflects their own understanding and analytical perspective.

Stronger responses typically took time to carefully deconstruct the statement, identifying key themes and considering its implications from multiple angles. These responses often presented a well-structured argument, including both points in support of the statement as well as thoughtful counterpoints, before arriving at a balanced and well-reasoned conclusion.

In both the written and practical components, the most successful candidates consistently supported their points with specific, relevant examples drawn from the chosen practitioner's body of work or broader influence. This helped to ground their responses in the real-world context and demonstrated a secure grasp of the practitioner's significance within the performing arts.

Ultimately, understanding and effectively communicating the impact of the selected practitioner should remain central to the response. Whether through critical analysis, performance, or both, candidates should aim to show how their chosen figure has influenced not only creative output but also wider professional approaches within the field.

The table below summarises some typical features of candidates who did well and who did less well in their responses in the June 2025 series.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
- carefully examined the given statement, identifying both a main argument and a counterargument to develop a well-balanced response - conducted purposeful and relevant research to inform their work - applied strong research skills to critically evaluate and extract useful information from a range of sources - analysed and integrated their research effectively, drawing well-considered conclusions based on their findings - demonstrated a deep and thorough understanding of the chosen practitioner(s) and the significance of their influence on performing arts repertoire and industry practices - showed clear insight into the factors that influenced the practitioner(s) and how those influences shaped their work - delivered a practical demonstration that reflected a high level of technical skill and creative interpretation - organised their work in a coherent and logical structure, making their ideas easy to follow - maintained a consistent focus on the statement throughout their response, ensuring it guided both written and practical elements.	- did not take adequate time to engage with or fully understand the given statement before beginning their response - treated research as a separate task rather than integrating it to inform and strengthen their work - lacked the necessary research skills to conduct meaningful, focused investigation - provided only basic or biographical details about the chosen practitioner, without deeper analysis or contextual understanding - did not explore the practitioner's influences or how these shaped their creative work - demonstrated limited technical skill in the practical element of the assessment - created or presented practical work that had minimal relevance to the given statement - produced a response that lacked structure and did not form a cohesive or focused interpretation of the task.

Question 1

'When a performance challenges an audience, it benefits a wider society'

In response to the statement above:

- 1 Produce a report that evaluates the work and influences of **one** practitioner in response to the statement above.

(Guide of 1000–1500 words)

[30]

It is essential that candidates understand that the written task requires an evaluative report on the chosen practitioner's work and influences. An analytical approach is vital, and candidates should go beyond simply describing the practitioner's work.

A key feature of high-achieving work was the clear and consistent connection made between the given statement and the practitioner's work. These candidates maintained a strong, considered link to the given statement throughout.

These candidates not only explored the practitioner's creative contributions but also placed them within a broader social, historical, or political context. Crucially, they demonstrated how these contextual factors influenced the practitioner's development and artistic decisions. In responses which scored lower marks, contextual information was included but not effectively integrated, often presented as isolated facts rather than part of a coherent line of enquiry.

The strongest responses from this series also demonstrated a sophisticated and investigative process, using evaluation to explore the practitioner's significance and influence in depth. There was significant evidence of robust and relevant research, with sources carefully selected for their validity and credibility. The quality of research had a direct impact on the overall depth and accuracy of the report.

Successful reports consistently applied critical thinking, drawing clear conclusions rather than merely referencing or summarising the practitioner's work. These candidates used appropriate performing arts terminology throughout, and presented their work in a coherent, logical structure that aligned with the expectations of a formal piece of writing.

By contrast, less successful responses were often descriptive or generic in nature. In some cases, candidates simply provided a biographical overview without offering any meaningful evaluation or analysis. Such responses lacked depth and did not address the central focus of the task.

Finally, a clear conclusion was an important feature of the most successful reports. These candidates provided a well-considered, summative evaluation that revisited the statement and synthesised their findings to deliver a thoughtful, evidence-based response.

Areas to develop

Teachers are encouraged to support candidates in developing:

- analytical and evaluative writing skills
- the ability to make critical, well-informed links between the statement and the practitioner's work

Areas to develop

- the use of appropriate performing arts vocabulary
- structured report writing with a clear introduction, development of ideas, and a conclusion
- effective research strategies using valid, relevant sources
- the ability to contextualise the practitioner's work within broader influences.

Question 2

- 2 Present a practical demonstration showing **two** contrasting pieces in response to the statement above. This may or may not include the work of the practitioner evaluated in Question 1.

(5–8 minutes)

[30]

The practical demonstration requires candidates to present two contrasting performance pieces. This contrast may be expressed through differences in style, genre, discipline, or in mood, atmosphere, and artistic intention. It is important to note that candidates are not expected to demonstrate skills or techniques beyond those developed during the course.

In the most successful responses, candidates selected performance material that was both relevant and appropriate to their skills and to the assessment task. Their technical ability was secure and, in many cases, accomplished. These candidates effectively conveyed stylistic qualities through the precise use of performance skills, reflecting a clear understanding of genre and intention.

Furthermore, stronger candidates made their creative intentions and key influences clearly visible throughout the performance, aligning their practical work closely with the given statement. It was evident that the repertoire or material chosen was selected strategically to support the candidate's perspective or argument, rather than as a generic performance showcase.

Performances that demonstrated previously developed skills applied to new material often proved highly effective. This approach enabled candidates to focus on refined execution and expressive communication, rather than on learning unfamiliar techniques, thus allowing for more confident and precise delivery.

This series also featured some highly sophisticated demonstrations that explored the role of technology in performance. In these cases, candidates used the practical platform to evaluate the benefits and limitations of technology within live or recorded performance, fully engaging with the given statement and using the demonstration itself as a tool for argument and exploration.

Areas to develop

Teachers are encouraged to support candidates in developing:

- selecting repertoire that allows for both contrast and clarity of intention
- applying well-developed performance skills in a context that highlights precision and control
- ensuring that the practical element directly relates to and supports the candidate's response to the statement
- rehearsing and structuring practical work to a high standard, with clear artistic purpose.

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- 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
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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.

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