

Moderators' report

GCSE

DRAMA

OCR Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Drama

J316

For first teaching in 2016

J316/01/02 Summer 2025 series

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Introduction

Our Moderators' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on centres' assessment of moderated work, based on what has been observed by the moderation team. These reports include a general commentary of accuracy of internal assessment judgements, identify good practice in relation to evidence collation and presentation, and comment on the quality of centre assessment decisions against individual Learning Objectives. The report also highlights areas where requirements have been misinterpreted and provides guidance to centre assessors on requirements for accessing higher mark bands. Where appropriate, the report will also signpost other sources of information that centre assessors will find helpful.

OCR completes moderation of centre-assessed work in order to quality assure the internal assessment judgements made by assessors within a centre. Where OCR cannot confirm the centre's marks, we may adjust them in order to align them to the national standard. Any adjustments to centre marks are detailed on the Moderation Adjustments report, which can be downloaded from Interchange when results are issued. Centres should also refer to their individual centre report provided after moderation has been completed. In combination, these centre-specific documents and this overall report should help to support centres' internal assessment and moderation practice for future series.

Online courses

We have created online courses to build your confidence in delivering, marking and administering internal assessment for our qualifications. Courses are available for Cambridge Nationals, GCSE, A Level and Cambridge Technicals (2016).

Cambridge Nationals

All teachers delivering our Cambridge Nationals suite are asked to complete the Essentials for the NEA course, which describes how to guide and support your students. You'll receive a certificate which you should retain.

Following this you can also complete a subject-specific Focus on Internal Assessment course for your individual Cambridge Nationals qualification, covering marking and delivery.

GCSE, A Level and Cambridge Technicals (2016)

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.

Accessing our online courses

You can access all our online courses from our teacher support website [Teach Cambridge](https://www.teachcambridge.org).

These free online courses currently cover the end-to-end NEA process for teachers. 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.

These self-paced online courses are intended for any teachers. During the course, you will engage with interactive content on subjects such as guidance on unit content, structure and administrative processes.

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

General overview

Centres continue to prepare candidates well for this component by giving access to visiting practitioners and workshops. Successful centres encourage candidates to be innovative and creative in the creation of their performances. The majority of centres have a good understanding of the assessment criteria and how it should be applied and their marking is in line with nationally agreed standards. A small number of centres overmark the portfolios moving too quickly to the top of Bands 4 and 5 with evidence which places candidates in Bands 3 or low Band 4. Centres who carry out robust internal moderation are to be congratulated for the accuracy of their submissions.

Administration

The submissions received from the majority of centres was exemplary – all relevant documentation was provided. Most centres filmed the performances from a central position close to the performance space which enabled all candidates to be seen and heard. There are still a small number of centres who do not place the camera centrally. Centres are only required to use one camera to capture the performances.

A small number of centres are still using the wrong entry code – J316/01 indicates that the centre will be submitting the requested sample through Submit for Assessment – Running Order, Centre Assessment Forms, portfolios and performances. J316/02 indicates that the centre will be submitting all of their sample through postal moderation. Uploading the Centre Assessment Form with the portfolio on Submit for Assessment is to be encouraged. Centres are asked to make sure that all uploaded portfolios are uploaded the correct way round.

A very small number of centres are still confusing the J316/02 moderator with the J316/03 examiner – sending their sample to the wrong address. Centres are asked to carefully check their paperwork to make sure that the sample for moderation is sent to the moderator. Samples should be sent to the moderator or uploaded to Submit for Assessment within 3 working days of the request for the sample being made – a few centres were significantly outside of this time frame when submitting their sample.

The Running Order is a vital tool in the moderation process as it allows the moderator to quickly and efficiently identify where the candidates for moderation are located. An increasing number of centres indicated on the Centre Assessment Form the group number of the candidate or secured together the portfolios of candidates for moderation who were in the same group – this was incredibly useful and very much appreciated by moderators.

USBs submitted tended to be clearly labelled with each candidate in the sample identified in separate chapters. Fewer centres are submitting work on DVD but those who did, for the most part, clearly chaptered them. Centres are asked to check the filmed performances when they are uploaded to make sure that they are able to be played on a laptop. Centres who password protected USBs made sure that the correct password was forwarded to the moderator.

Best practice is for all candidates to identify themselves by name and candidate number at the start of the performance. This line-up should also include design candidates. An increasing number of centres also had that information on a sign held by the candidate. It is important that candidates say their name and number clearly. It was particularly appreciated by moderators when candidates identified the character/s they were playing and any costume changes that would occur during the performance. Lighting for the introduction of candidates should be arranged so that the lighting does not wash out either the candidate's face or their sign. An increasing number of centres provided photographs of candidates in costume with their submission which was most helpful.

The audience for this component is the moderator and centres are reminded that the camera should be placed in a central position face on to the performance space so that it captures all the action. A small

number of centres set their camera so far back that any nuance in performance is lost. It is worth carrying out preliminary checks to make sure volume levels are appropriate and that lighting is not washing out facial expressions.

Teacher commentary on the Centre Assessment Form and, increasingly, within the body of the portfolio was often specific, insightful and pertinent. Fewer teachers are just using the wording from the assessment criteria to justify marks submitted. Commentary was at its best when the centre highlighted why a mark had been awarded in conjunction with links to the assessment criteria within the body of the portfolio. A few centres very helpfully included a table detailing what their annotations meant.

Centres must not provide templates or questions for candidates to assist in the creation of the portfolio.

Portfolios

A small minority of centres are still allowing candidates to use bulky art books or folders for their portfolios. Portfolios should be completed on A4 paper with all pages secured together. The candidate's name and number should be on each page. Some candidates are obviously very enthusiastic about their work and can, at times, create overlong portfolios. Centres are asked to check the requirements of the portfolios in the specification.

There were many examples of excellent portfolio work. Candidates who organised their work into three distinct sections - using headings and sub-headings - and focused on meeting the assessment criteria for that section had the most successful outcomes. It was pleasing to see candidates using analysis and evaluation throughout the portfolio. Candidates who analysed and evaluated the decision making throughout the process from initial idea to final performance had the most successful outcomes.

Some centres are still encouraging candidates to evaluate more than one stimulus before choosing the one they are going to use. Candidates must not receive marks for research on stimuli not used. Candidates should not include detailed research about practitioners. The portfolio should only contain material relevant to the piece being devised. The most positive outcomes came from candidates who researched one stimulus, carried out further research raised by the initial research and then identified a clear and defined idea of what they wanted to create. Candidates who had clear dramatic intentions tended to use their research to inform this. Practitioner theories and techniques being used should only be included where they have a practical impact on the piece being devised.

The very best portfolios were succinct and focused documents which detailed choices made and why. An increasing number of candidates are making choices and adapting their piece to create a specific audience response. More candidates this year specifically mention the intended impact for audiences. Candidates who were most successful had clearly defined dramatic intentions which led to some very high-quality performances.

In a devising unit there is an expectation that candidates should pay attention to the scripting of their piece. Those candidates who did analyse and evaluate their script throughout the process tended to create pieces which had a greater impact on the audience and met their dramatic intentions. For more candidates this year the choice of language in dialogue, monologue and chorus was as important as the physical performance. These candidates also evaluated and analysed their use of language in their final evaluation.

Candidates who had thought carefully about the structure of their piece tended to be most successful in presenting their devised drama.

More candidates this year used diagrams, still photographs and sketches to show the development of ideas. Candidates who annotated these tended to respond in more depth.

Candidates who did not use a lesson-by-lesson or diary format for Section Two of the portfolio – Creating and developing drama – tended to be more analytical and focused more sharply on the decisions made – how and why. Candidates who used a reflective approach to this section often demonstrated how the play was evolving and provided specific detail about decisions made and plans to develop the piece further.

It was pleasing to note that candidates are giving more time and consideration to the evaluation of the final performance and analysis of how to improve for future performances. A number of candidates were searingly honest about their involvement in the creation of the devised piece and how and why they would approach it differently.

Performances

There was a good spread of engagement across all stimuli but the most popular tended to be *Diamond Annie*, *Corona Diaries*, *Ink*, *Seated Figure*, *Crashed the Wedding*, *The Telephone Call* and the letter. Themes of crime, isolation, misogyny, regret, racism, deception, loneliness, grief, addiction, abuse, friendship and aging gave rise to some extraordinarily sophisticated and effective pieces of drama. Some of the pieces created challenged their audience to think in a different way about an issue.

It was very clear that candidates, no matter what their skill level, engaged with their performance and enjoyed the challenge of creating effective and thought-provoking drama.

Some centres continue to create opportunities for candidates to receive feedback on their pieces during the devising process which led to focused adaptations. Numerous candidates referred to filming rehearsals and using what they saw of the performance to make changes which would enhance the impact on an audience.

Moderators reported seeing many performances which would not have been out of place on a professional stage, such were the skill levels on display.

Fewer candidates are exceeding the recommended maximum time frames – creative editing allowing 'the story' to be told succinctly is an important skill. Centres are advised to adhere to the time frames given within the specification.

The use of simple staging, lighting, sound, props, costume and set supported candidates to deliver their devised pieces.

Candidates who had focused on the structure and scripting of their pieces often created scenes in which characters were developed. It is worth noting that the devised pieces do not have to be finished stories with a definitive ending.

Design

Centres must make sure that candidates understand the full requirements of each design option before they begin their work. All required tasks must be completed.

Again, this year there were fewer design candidates and the range of ability was wide. The best outcomes were achieved when the designer was an integral part of the group working closely with the performers to understand and deliver a design element which supported and enhanced the performance piece. Most candidates who chose a design option submitted the appropriate supporting evidence but some did not.

The most successful design candidates had received guidance and support before embarking on their design brief.

Candidates who did well generally:	Candidates who did less well generally:
• had clear dramatic intentions • focused on scripting – the language being used and why • had a clearly defined structure • created a portfolio which detailed the devising process • analysed and evaluated throughout the devising process • created pieces which demonstrated their skills • in the case of design candidates, created a fully integrated design which supported the performance.	• had no clear dramatic intentions • did not focus on the language being used • did not have a defined structure • created a portfolio which was unstructured and did not focus on the devising process • included little or no analysis and evaluation • did not adequately demonstrate their performance skills • in the case of design candidates did not provide adequate evidence to support their designs.

Misconception



Candidates cannot receive credit for research into stimuli that is not being used.

Most common causes of centres not passing

Incomplete paperwork – lack of portfolio and performance

Common misconceptions

Only research relevant to the stimuli should be included in the portfolio. Candidates should indicate how the research informs the creation of the piece.

Candidates should not research stimuli they are not using.

Candidates should not define techniques.

Avoiding potential malpractice

Centres must not provide templates or a framework for the portfolio.

Check for common passages in a group's portfolios.

Check for use of AI technology.

Make sure all sources are acknowledged.

Helpful resources

[Planning and Teaching document - OCR](#)

Additional comments

Make sure each candidate is clearly identified

Make sure a Running Order is included in your sample for moderation

Supporting you

Teach Cambridge

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

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

Reviews of marking

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

Access to Scripts

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

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

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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.

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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.

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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).

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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.

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