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# **GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS**

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**DRAMA  
GCSE**

**SUMMER 2019**

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:  
<https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?!=en>

### **Online Results Analysis**

WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

### **Annual Statistical Report**

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

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# DRAMA

## GCSE

Summer 2019

### UNIT 1: DEVISING THEATRE

#### General Comments

On completion of the second year of the new specification, we would like to thank all centres for their continued commitment to ensuring that all candidates were given the opportunity to achieve their potential. It is apparent from the standard of work across the range that centres are providing candidates with a range of experiences which enrich their understanding of drama and theatre.

This unit is worth 40% of the qualification and requires candidates to submit three elements – portfolio of supporting evidence, a practical/technical performance, and evaluation of final performance. Moderators noted that centres tended to choose the more traditional styles/practitioners e.g. Brecht, TIE with very few experimenting successfully with contemporary practitioner/theatre companies such as Splendid, Emma Rice and Gecko. As noted last year, the very best work displayed an in-depth knowledge and practical understanding of the skill requirements of their chosen genre / practitioner. These candidates demonstrated a sophisticated understanding evidenced through the way in which the selected techniques were embodied in the final performance. Unfortunately a small number of centres failed to take on board the advice given last year to avoid using a 'mix and match' approach and this had an impact on the quality of the final piece and marks. All stimuli appealed equally to the full range of candidates with some highly creative and imaginative interpretations. The very best candidates were able to develop the initial ideas to achieve mature and thought provoking messages. On the whole centres adhered to the time specification and this had a significant impact on the quality of the final performances.

#### Comments on individual questions/sections

Although the majority of centres adhered to the guidance provided for completion of the supporting evidence i.e. word count, appendices, some continue to complicate the work and present large art folders full of irrelevant material which is not fulfilling the criteria. The best work developed the portfolio under the three specified headings with many choosing and using the appendices in a relevant and meaningful way, following a simple format, with candidates adhering to the word count and the requirements of each section. Centres are advised to reference the exemplar material on the secure website for further guidance.

A minority of centres chose to use the audio visual presentation – these were of a very good standard with all candidates across the mark range communicating their ideas clearly and succinctly.

Once again centres had adhered to the advice given in last year's report regarding the evaluation with the majority of candidates focusing on their individual final performance and kept to the three clear areas stipulated in the specification. Candidates displayed sound evaluative and analytical skills, referencing specific moments, however this is a skill that many candidates find challenging and is an area which centres could focus on developing.

The A4 (2 sides of bullet point notes) must be submitted with the work and centres are reminded that these **MUST** be short and succinct.

## Summary of key points

- Please ensure candidates identify themselves clearly at the beginning of the performance
- Ensure that the camera is set up as near as possible to the stage
- Avoid blackouts wherever possible and complicated scene changes
- Ensure effective use of space e.g. defining stage area in large spaces
- Avoid unnecessary appendices with the portfolio of evidence
- Annotating your candidates work to show the moderator where and why marks have been awarded is recommended to aid the moderation process.

# DRAMA

## GCSE

Summer 2019

### UNIT 2: PERFORMING THEATRE

#### General Comments

On the whole examiners viewed a good range of pieces with candidates succeeding in reaching the full range of marks. Examiners reported on sensitive and subtle interpretations, and some more exciting and experimental performances. Centres are encouraged to choose more innovative texts which match the individual candidates' performance skills. Once again this reinforces the process of choosing a suitable piece of theatre for specific groups of candidates as this is the key to the success in this unit. Some performances showed maturity, insight and sophistication and held the audiences' attention throughout. Again we congratulate these young people for their outstanding preparation and talent.

#### Comments on individual questions/sections

In general examiners noted that the standard achieved in the design element was significantly weaker in comparison to the acting candidates. Although there were examples of excellence, examiners noted that some design candidates displayed little or no understanding of their chosen skill. We would remind centres that design candidates do not need to do a Viva with the visiting examiner. In order to raise standards in this area technical candidates need to:

- work consistently with the acting group throughout the rehearsal process
- follow the guidelines in the specification regarding the minimum requirements
- show an understanding of how their design skill enhances the chosen extracts

On the whole centres used a range of interesting pieces that challenged the students to produce inspiring and mature performances. Centres were creative in their adaptation of scripts which allowed them to fulfil the requirements of the specification.

#### Artistic Intentions

The approach to Artistic Intentions tended to be inconsistent, many were clear and set out sound motivational and performance / design objectives. However, some were very brief and bore very little relation to the performance or design. We would remind centres that artistic intentions are included in the examiners final mark and centres should work with the candidates to ensure that they are achievable in the final performance. For design candidates, clear and detailed artistic intentions are important, as they no longer have a portfolio or viva.

Examiners also noted that all centres had tried to enhance the final performance through a range of simple technical elements such as music to begin and end a piece / simple lighting / costume and set.

Centres are reminded that they are NOT permitted to perform extracts from the plays within the same date range as the Unit 3 chosen set text, please refer to page 11 in the specification for further clarification.

Please note the good practice guidelines shared at each CPD course i.e. The basic requirement of learning lines thoroughly, avoiding the heavy reliance on 'prompts' which affects candidates' ability to sustain the performance; rehearsing with props before the examination; rehearsing in costume – particularly period costume – which changes the dynamics of a character and requires a lot of preparation and physical adaptation; rehearsing in the examination space prior to the day of the exam.

On the whole, the majority of centres are providing candidates with positive experiences in a supportive environment, allowing them to enjoy their final performance of the GCSE Drama course.

### **Summary of key points**

- Centres must ensure that all paperwork is ready for the examiner on the day of the final exam (Check WJEC website for guidelines)
- Performances have to be recorded and a copy sent to the board within 7 days
- Candidates must introduce themselves at the beginning of each performance, stating name, role and candidate number.
- Artistic Intention forms need to be sent to the visiting examiner prior to the performance (your examiner will liaise with you regarding this)
- Centres are reminded that the chosen text at Unit 3 will have an impact on choice of texts for performance in Unit 2. (see specification for further guidance)

# DRAMA

## GCSE

Summer 2019

### UNIT 3: INTERPRETING THEATRE

#### General Comments

The questions in this year's paper were balanced with a focus on both acting and technical areas. In general examiners notes that candidates' understanding of acting far outweighed their understanding of how design worked within their set text. The main issue was that candidates did not read the questions/rubric correctly and failed to focus on the specified requirements. This led to many answers containing information which was not required or not relevant.

#### Comments on individual questions/sections

##### Section A

- (i) This question was generally well answered with candidates giving a range of suitable vocal expressions which showed an understanding of the character and the context of the line within the scene.
- (ii) Although the majority of candidates stated two relevant sound effects, some failed to develop their answer and explain how these enhanced the specified scene.
- (iii) Whilst this appeared to be a simple and accessible question, many candidates gave a superficial character description failing to cover three different aspects of the character within the specified scene. However the majority of candidates gave a range of practical suggestions for movement, gesture and facial expressions.
- (iv) This question displayed the weakest response with the majority failed to focus on the rubric in the question. Although candidates were able to state a suitable acting area, many failed to adapt their chosen style and set to accommodate this. Key problems were:
  - little or no understanding of a production style for their set design
  - little or no understanding of set on their chosen stage e.g. floor cloth, area above the acting area, back cloth etc.
  - little or no understanding of how colour within the set communicates meaning
  - lack of creativity and originality in designing a set for their chosen scene
  - whilst projections/gobos/video were accepted as part of set design, some candidates focused on lighting cues in general which were not part of the rubric
  - too much focus on areas which were not specified in the rubric e.g. costume, sound effects and detailed character positioning.
- (v) This was well answered with candidates showing a good understanding of character motivation and discussing vocals, movement and interaction in detail. The very best answers worked through the whole scene, referencing key moments to illustrate their ideas and ensuring a balance across all three areas. Again some candidates did not read the question correctly and focussed on one area e.g. voice or a detailed character description.

## **Section B**

Once again, candidates were given the opportunity to view an interesting range of performances which enthused and inspired them and this had a significant impact on the quality of responses from the whole range of ability. Candidates had clearly enjoyed these productions and their discussions on set / interaction displayed a clear understanding of both the Playwright and Director's intentions. They were able to respond effectively as an audience member and make relevant references to key moments in their chosen scenes.

Key problems with this question were:

- not referring to two scenes
- describing rather than evaluating
- not giving personal response

### **Summary of key points**

Candidates should be reminded to read not only the question, but where relevant the accompanying scaffolding bullet points. Many candidates this year, discussed aspects that were not mentioned in the question as part of their answers. Although candidates are not penalised for this, they are not awarded marks for discussing aspects that are required within the question.



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