



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GCSE (NEW)
DRAMA**

SUMMER 2022

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.

Unit	Page
Unit 1: Devising Theatre	1
Unit 2: Performing Theatre	3
Unit 3: Interpreting Theatre	5

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UNIT 1: DEVISING THEATRE

General Comments

On completion of this year, we would like to thank all centres for their continued commitment to ensuring that all candidates were given the opportunity to achieve their potential. In spite of extremely difficult circumstances as a result of the pandemic, it is apparent that centres endeavoured to provide candidates with a range of experiences, which enriched their understanding of drama and theatre.

This unit is worth 40% of the qualification and requires candidates to submit three elements; a portfolio of supporting evidence, a practical/technical performance and evaluation of final performance. As in previous years, moderators noted that in the very best work candidates showed highly imaginative ideas in response to their chosen stimulus. They had an excellent understanding of their chosen practitioner, which was evident across all three elements. This understanding allowed them to create a piece of theatre that highlighted the key techniques/characteristics associated with the practitioner/style but also resulted in a well-structured piece displaying a clear, dramatic shape.

Moderators noted that many more centres experimented with practitioners/companies such as Emma Rice, Splendid, Frantic and whilst this does give candidates a greater knowledge of theatre, the work involving these practitioners sometimes lacked a depth of understanding and tended to focus on one area e.g. Frantic/chair duet as opposed to why a technique is used and to what effect. However, the very best work demonstrated a sophisticated understanding evidenced through the way selected techniques were embodied in the final performance. As in previous years, a small number of centres still used a mix of practitioners e.g. Brecht and Stanislavski, which impacted, on the quality and content of all three elements. We continue to urge all centres whilst focusing and experimenting with a range of practitioners/styles throughout the course it is imperative to choose and focus on just **one** for the final exam. Centres are also reminded that a style must allow candidates to access all of the assessment criteria e.g. physical theatre, Artaud must and should include dialogue to indicate a complete understanding.

Moderators noted that more centres/candidates are choosing the design option for this unit. They noted that some design candidates produced work of an exceptional standard. As with the acting option the very best design work showed a sophisticated understanding of the chosen style and it was apparent from all three elements the designers had been an integral part of the group from the outset, contributing to the initial ideas/research and working closely with actors throughout the rehearsal process. Moderators did note that some design candidates worked with a style that did not allow them sufficient scope to develop their design option. However, it was also noted that some design candidates, despite working with relatively limited facilities, produced work that was innovative and highly creative.

A significant number of candidates chose the monologue option with moderators noting that generally these proved highly successful across the ability range. Although this option is only available for 2022 it does allow centres to consider this option linked to a group for a candidate who has a prolonged absence etc.

The majority of centres adhered to the time specifications.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Most centres adhered to the guidance provided for completion of the supporting evidence. Moderators noted that a small number of centres did not adhere to the three specified stages with candidates producing an essay amalgamating all three sections. The very best work showed an excellent understanding of each section's requirements. However, moderators did note that section 3, how ideas had been developed, amended and refined during the development of the devised process tended to be the weakest. Once again, the very best work was presented in a simple format, adhered to the word count, and used appendices in a meaningful and relevant way. We would ask centres not to send huge art folders containing just three paragraphs.

The majority of centres ensured that candidates were provided with a suitable space and simple design elements e.g. costume, music, which had a significant impact on the overall performance. We would ask centres not to use extended blackouts and numerous set changes, which have a significant impact on the structure and flow of the final performance.

A significant number of centres uploaded their work onto SURPASS which greatly aided the moderation process ensuring all work was accessible and could be viewed by the moderator. Candidates must clearly identify themselves before the performance and centres must ensure the audio/visual footage is of a good quality for the moderation process. Cameras should be placed as close as possible to the performance allowing coverage of the whole acting area.

Moderators noted that the evaluation tended to be the weakest element, primarily because a significant number of candidates discussed the process as opposed to the final performance. The very best work fulfilled the requirements of the three specified sections focusing on their individual performance as opposed to analysing and evaluating the work of the whole group. The notes (2 sides of A4 bullet points) should be submitted with the final evaluations, and we would remind centres that these notes must be short and succinct.

Although not a requirement, we would ask centres to annotate candidates written work as it does aid the moderation process to know where and why marks were awarded.

Summary of key points

- Centres should focus on the theatrical aims of one practitioner, theatre company or genre and not mix and match different ones.
- The final section of the portfolio of supporting evidence should not only note areas of development and refinement but should also refer to why these changes/ideas improved the performance/design.
- The evaluation should focus on the performance/design rather than the rehearsal process. Learners should focus on their own performance/design.

DRAMA

GCSE (NEW)

Summer 2022

UNIT 2: PERFORMING THEATRE

General Comments

Moderators noted that they viewed some sophisticated work with candidates displaying excellent performance skills, highly effective interpretations of character and making significant individual contributions. Many centres had chosen scripts/characters, which were well matched to candidates' ability and skills. This allowed candidates across the ability range to reach their full potential.

Comments on individual questions/sections

A significant number of centres used new and contemporary texts, which produced some exciting and sophisticated performances although excellent work was also produced by using texts by "old favourites". The very best work across the ability range indicated that candidates had been given sufficient preparation time, despite difficult circumstances to rehearse and refine their work which resulted in polished performances.

Unfortunately, a small number of centres allowed individual candidates to use scripts for their final exam. We would remind centres that this is **not allowed**. Candidates must learn their allotted part and candidates will receive more marks for learning a small proportion of the script, even if it falls under the specified time than reading a script.

Once again, the number of candidates opting for the design option has significantly grown. As with Unit 1 the very best design work showed a close collaboration between actors and designers throughout the rehearsal process. The weakest design work tended to be by candidates who were given the design option but had little or no understanding of the requirements.

Centres are reminded that candidates' performances must adhere to the specified time requirements. The text chosen for Unit 2 **must** meet the contrasting text criteria noted within the specification, failure to adhere will result in candidates being penalised 5 marks.

As with Unit 1 the majority of centres provided candidates with a suitable space and simple design elements, which not only enhanced the quality of the final performance but also allowed candidates to apply specific skills e.g. effective use of props, use of space will contribute to application of physical skills.

Candidates are allowed to multi-role and in many popular choices e.g. Bouncers and Shakers, it is a feature of the play and candidates produce some highly effective performances. However, we would remind centres that asking candidates to play two totally different characters in a short performance e.g. Matron & Dolores in "Be My Baby" does put an added burden on a student and does require them to fulfil the assessment criteria for two totally different characters. Similarly, we would ask centres to consider the age requirements of specific characters e.g. a 16-year student performing an eighty year old character.

Artistic Intentions

Many centres adhered to advice given at previous CPD events and directed candidates to focus on specific areas when writing their artistic intentions. Highlighting specific moments e.g. two key moments where and how voice is used to create tension, is far more effective than simply stating 'I am using vocal work to create my character.' Design candidates can provide extra material e.g. costume designs, LFX plots etc, to alert the examiner to the work they have undertaken throughout the preparation process.

It is envisaged that in 2023 examiner visits will return for Unit 2 and we would like to take this opportunity to remind centres of the following requirements:

- Centres must ensure that all paperwork is ready for the examiner on the day of the final exam (Check WJEC website for guidelines).
- Performances must 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).

Summary of key points

- Artistic Intentions must be relevant to the performance/design.
- Texts chosen for Unit 2 must meet the criteria for contrasting texts which are linked to the chosen Unit 3 text.
- Learners must introduce themselves at the beginning of the recording.

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UNIT 3: INTERPRETING THEATRE

General Comments

As in previous series the questions in this year's paper were balanced with a focus on both acting and design elements. Like previous years, examiners noted that the candidates' understanding of acting far outweighed their understanding of how design worked within their set text. A significant number fail to read the question and focus on areas which are not specified in the rubric. This led to information, which was not relevant or required, and subsequently not awarded marks. However, most candidates timed the paper well allowing them to complete both sections with detailed responses.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

- (i) This question was well answered with the majority of candidates stating a relevant movement/gesture for the specific character.
- (ii) Once again, most candidates gave suitable hair and make-up suggestions. Most candidates specified two relevant reasons linked to their choice. A small percentage discussed costume which was not stated in the rubric and a few candidates said they "won't use make-up". Candidates should be reminded if a question asks for a specific requirement, it should be fulfilled in their response.
- (iii) The responses to this question were variable, whilst some candidates showed an understanding of the character and gave relevant vocal suggestions with coverage of the whole extract, other responses gave superficial character descriptions and very general vocal directions e.g. "high tone, fast pace" with limited coverage of the whole extract. A few candidates discussed movement which was not the focus of the question and subsequently were not awarded marks.
- (iv) This question was very well answered.
 - Candidates chose a range of different and appropriate stages.
 - Their responses indicated they understood how these stages should be used in performance e.g. position of the audience, different areas of their chosen stage.
 - Most responses indicated they understood how space can be used to highlight relationships between characters.
 - Movement was relevant to the specific characters and showed an understanding of the requirements of the specified extract.
 - There was good coverage of the whole extract.
 - Most candidates focused entirely on the requirements of the question.

- (v) This question displayed the weakest response with many candidates failing to follow the specified rubric and discussing sound, costume, positioning of characters different types of stages as opposed to theatre in the round, which was specified. A minority of candidates discussed the extract specified for Q1-4.

Q5 should demonstrate a candidate's wider knowledge of the play:

- Whilst the majority of candidates understood theatre in the round in theory i.e. where the audience was positioned, this understanding was not evident in their choice of set.
- A significant percentage of candidates stated "minimalism" as their chosen style and subsequently went on to describe detailed and elaborate sets which were totally inappropriate for Theatre in the Round.
- A significant number of candidates failed to explore creatively the opportunities awarded by specific scenes within specific plays, adhering rigidly to the requirements of the play. Whilst these responses were awarded marks, we would encourage centres to experiment and to develop their own ideas for staging scenes.
- Many candidates were unaware of the original staging conditions of their chosen text. We would remind centres an understanding of the historical, cultural and social background of a text is an OFQUAL requirement. Detailed notes and blended learning activities covering all these areas are available on the WJEC resources website.
- However, some candidates particularly within '1984' produced detailed and imaginative responses covering all specified areas.

Section B

Despite extremely difficult conditions candidates had been given the opportunity to view whether live or online a range of productions, which was evident from the responses, had inspired and excited them. Both the design and acting option were generally well answered with the majority of candidates following the required rubric.

- A small number of candidates only discussed one moment as opposed to the specified two.
- A small number of candidates did not state the production they had viewed.
- A small number did not specify audience response.
- Some candidates gave detailed plot summaries which are not required and use valuable time.
- Some candidates tend to describe as opposed to analyse and evaluate.

Summary of key points

- Candidates must ensure that they read the questions very carefully, especially the higher tariff questions that include additional bullet points.
- Candidates, especially those of lower ability may use the additional bullet points as headings within their responses to ensure that the relevant information has been included.
- When choosing an extract for the wider knowledge question, candidates are encouraged not to choose extracts that are too long. It is better to focus in detail on a smaller extract.
- Within Section B, candidates should be careful not to describe the narrative of the live production.



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