



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GCE
DRAMA AND THEATRE
AS/Advanced**

SUMMER 2023

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:
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Online Results Analysis

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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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General Certificate of Education
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Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced
UNIT 1: THEATRE WORKSHOP

General Comments

Once again, the teachers must be thanked and praised for preparing the candidates so thoroughly. It is nice to see candidates enjoying preparing and performing confidently once again, following the challenging period experienced over the past three years. We appreciate your commitment and your care for the candidates and the practical work is always a testament to hard and consistent work of centres.

Most centres succeeded in creating challenging and well-structured experimental work. There was a good variety of plays, and the majority were able to examine the work of practitioners in an intelligent way, creating work that was both exciting and encapsulating. A few centres need to ensure that the techniques of the practitioners or the theatre company are clearly visible in the work and remember that it is better to focus on four to five techniques and ensure they are effectively applied, as opposed to exploring more than this but not applying them appropriately or correctly. Most centres made admirable attempts to prepare suitable performance spaces using sound, light, costumes and props to ensure that the artistic intentions of the learners were realised.

The number of technical and design applicants increases annually, but it must be emphasised that there must be dedicated and suitable resources for lighting and sound for the sake of fairness for the candidates. There is also a need to ensure that the technical / design candidates work with their chosen group and are a core part of the process of creating and developing the work from scratch including researching the practitioner or company chosen. It is evident to examiners when this is not the case as it is seen within the lack of process in their writing.

Our thanks to all centres who uploaded their work to Surpass this year; it expedites the process and is greatly appreciated by all those involved. We remain aware of the challenges presented by the uploading process and remain committed to continual improvement.

Documentation provision remains a challenge for many centres. Please note that the following should be uploaded to Surpass:

- (i) The centre approval form - standardisation cannot start without this signed form.
- (ii) Programme proforma with the names of the candidates
- (iii) The final script which shows the original script and the re-interpreted parts. This must be obtained in order to see and understand how the candidates have reinterpreted the work. One script is enough for each group.

- (iv) The candidates' individual marking sheets with the creative record.
- (v) The candidates need to introduce themselves clearly at the start of their practical work. It is impossible to identify candidates without this and endangers due process in the moderation.
- (vi) Ensure that the candidates put their names on their work and their examination number. Without this, it is difficult to identify work on Surpass.

Comments on individual questions/sections

AA1 - THE CREATIVE LOG

- The best clearly broke the work into sections and therefore met the requirements of each part. Supporting information was presented as appendices more effectively this year. Many candidates used photographs or 'screen shots' of sketches, mind maps etc. rather than the items themselves. There were obvious references to them to justify their inclusion.
- The best creative entries contained a coherent and effective discussion of the relevant research, including the techniques and conventions used and succeeded in making a connection between dramatic theory and practice.
- The rehearsal period should take us through the process of creating a character, working on the techniques and how the work came together. The best work managed to discuss what did not initially work and how they refined it before the final performance. Candidates must come back to the artistic intention of the work every time and how that reflects the practitioner or the company.
- It is necessary for the teacher to annotate the work consistently when marking as this is invaluable in supporting the moderator to see why the teacher has awarded the mark. It is also necessary to use the evaluation grid and quote from it when marking. A lot of the work this year lacked annotation by the centres, making the moderation much more difficult.
- In general, the marking of the creative entries was generous.

AO4 - THE EVALUATION

- Centres are reminded that the evaluation is completely separate from the creative log. The evaluation should only discuss the final performance as opposed to repeating the process documented in the creative log.
- Within the majority of centres, the analysis and evaluation work was effective, with most candidates referring to suitable key moments within the final performance and their personal contribution to the success of the work. This was a strength of the reports, alongside the considerations offered for refinement of the work.

AO2 - THE PERFORMANCE

- Centres produced work of an excellent standard this year, embodying a solid understanding of the practitioner/company.
- In less complete work, practical work lacked the techniques and did not show an understanding of the practitioner or the company. Instead, the work had inconsistent and sporadic references as opposed to this understanding permeating the work and driving it. Centres should seek to constantly review their work whilst within the process to consider if the practitioner / company can clearly be identified within the work or whether certain scenes need to be reworked. The work has to be refined constantly and this is the invention process at its best; something organic that develops all the time, and the development should be welcomed and challenged constantly by those leading the candidates.

Summary of key points

- Ensure that the correct documentation is provided on Surpass.
- Ensure that there is a programme with the names of the candidates and the practitioner / theatre company.
- A copy of the final script needs to be uploaded to each group, showing the original script and the re-interpreted parts.
- Ensure that the creative record discusses the creation, development and refinement, including discussion of the techniques in detail and keeping the artistic intent clear.
- It must be remembered that the evaluation is separate from the creative log.
- The teacher needs to annotate the work constantly when marking.
- Centres must ensure that the techniques are evident and clear within the practical work.

On behalf of all the moderators, thank you again for your continued efforts this year; it was a pleasure to witness such exciting and ambitious work from the candidates.

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UNIT 2: TEXT IN THEATRE

General Comments

Centres were informed of the sections that would be used in the paper this year in order to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. This allowed for some mitigation after the pandemic. With this prior knowledge, it was hoped that candidates would have a thorough and detailed knowledge of the sections.

Overall, it was felt that the standard of work from candidates was very good, with some excellent responses across all questions. However, some candidates had trouble with timing and understanding what the question required. Another evident weakness was candidates not reading the question nor understanding the information required in their answer.

The paper gave opportunities to answer as a director, designer and actor. The majority of centres chose to study *A View from the Bridge*. The second most popular text was *Medea*. There were limited answers on the other texts. It is hoped that the text changes in 2025 will lead to a wider range being used.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.A: This question focused on sound design. Many candidates saw the word design and went on to describe their set. Others concentrated on LX. There were many excellent answers with candidates demonstrating their creativity and theatrical knowledge. Many forgot to discuss the atmosphere and location. Others did not refer to the whole extract.
- Q.B (i) This question was focused on character motivation, positioning, movement and interaction between the two characters. Many of the answers were excellent and demonstrated a detailed knowledge of the extract and the interaction between the characters. Weaker answers did not cover all aspects of the question and tended to be descriptive. Others did not cover the whole extract.
- (ii) Answers to this question were the weakest. A lot of candidates described the production they had seen but did not link it to their ideas in B(i). The best answers linked what had been seen to the ideas in B(i). Some candidates discussed the design aspect of the productions which was not required.

Q.C There were some excellent answers to this question. Many candidates demonstrated understanding of the character and how to perform them. Some candidates only discussed one extract or wrote extensively on one extract and only a paragraph on the second. A few candidates also used the extract in question A.

Summary of key points

Overall, the standard of the answers were good. The below points should be considered further for future assessment:

- Candidates should ensure that they have read the question properly.
- Candidates should ensure that they cover all aspects of the question equally.
- The answer to question B(ii) should be written with consideration for the context of the answer in B(i)

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UNIT 3: TEXT IN ACTION

General Comments

Examiners took great pleasure in visiting a wide variety of centres this year and were appreciative of the warm welcome offered to them in every centre.

Once again, there was a special effort from the centres to create sophisticated and challenging work which deserves notable credit when considering the challenge of redeveloping candidates' confidence levels in the aftermath of the pandemic. Most centres succeeded in creating work that embodied both innovation and ambition.

In the mainstay, centres correctly applied the requisite administrative processes, with the correct documentation ready for the majority of examiners on arrival. The process and evaluation reports also arrived in a timely fashion in most cases.

Many centres managed to use the stimulus creatively, producing sophisticated and thought-provoking work that encapsulated a very good understanding of the chosen style. or theatre company/ practitioner.

Most centres presented a programme with the candidates' photos or had candidates introduce themselves to the examiner before starting to perform. This is a necessary part of the process to ensure the accuracy of marking.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Performance Work

It was refreshing to see candidates working in groups again, experimenting with creative ideas and developing techniques that resulted in sophisticated pieces of theatre. There were notable and concerted efforts by centres to use the available performance spaces in a creative and imaginative way. Examiners also made note that candidates had sought to apply performance skills in a manner that would capture the attention of the audience throughout the performance.

The understanding of technical candidates develops from year to year with the teachers and the candidates alike coming to better understand the requirements and the opportunities that are possible for designers.

It was clear in most of the centres that the candidate had played a core part in the creation process from the offset. It is essential that each centre prepares the design candidates to present a viva and includes documents of their ideas. This provides an opportunity for the candidates to explain their ideas and have the same opportunity as the actors.

Written Reports

The written reports had developed and improved again this year as the majority of the candidates followed a set structure and wrote in three parts, responding creatively to the stimulus.

Candidates could strengthen the analysis element of the written report by ensuring that they offer further insight into how they amended and refined the work for final performance.

Centres are reminded that the influence of live theatre needs to be discussed, whether that be a visit to a production in a theatre or via a digital platform. The best candidates succeeded in evaluating the performance in a considered and thorough manner.

Within the final section of the report, candidates are reminded to make specific references to how they applied the performance skills and techniques of the practitioner or style they chose to work with.

Summary of key points

- Candidates should present themselves to the camera or the examiner before beginning their performance to ensure marking remains accurate.
- Design candidates must be prepared in presenting a viva to the visiting examiner.
- Written reports should offer clarity on how the final performance has been amended and refined for the final performance.
- The written report should offer insight into how viewing of live theatre influenced the creation of the performance work.

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UNIT 4: TEXT IN PERFORMANCE

General Comments

Centres were provided with extract information before the exam in order to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. Specifically, the chosen extract for Section A was revealed, and candidates were informed that Section B would be focused on design. It was hoped that this information would help to focus the work before the exam.

However, some candidates had trouble with their timing, which was possibly to be expected given the circumstances. The most common fault was not reading the question in full nor understanding the demands, which resulted in many candidates failing to access the higher bands.

The length of the paper remains a challenge for some candidates, who struggled to complete the final question in the required detail.

In the most part however, the standard of papers were a testament to the hard work of the candidates and their teachers.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

This section did not ask candidates for context or original production conditions, but many candidates still spent a lot of time writing this at the beginning of their answers when it was not required.

- Q.A (i) The focus was on directing two characters within an extract. The question asked for stage type and style of acting. Many didn't offer this information and could not get into the higher assessment bands. Many candidates did not cover the whole extract. Some candidates concentrated on one character rather than the interaction between the two. The best answers worked their way through the extract and discussed their choice with clarity. There were some very creative answers which did not rely solely on the original stage directions. All texts were used.
- (ii) This was one of the weakest answered questions on the paper. The best answers focused on two productions and gave detailed information about the scene and how it influenced their ideas in A(i).

The weakest answers listed productions seen but did not link them to the answer in A(i). Candidates need to prepare different examples to be able to answer this question correctly. Some candidates only discussed one production which meant they were unable to access the top bands.

Q.B This was an acting question and asked candidates to discuss motivation, vocal and physical skills. There were some excellent answers with candidates demonstrating detailed knowledge of the character. The best answers covered all aspects of the question in a balanced way. The weakest answers did not cover the whole extract and concentrated too much on describing the character.

Section B

- Q.B (i) Candidates were told that this section would contain a design question with a thematic link. There were some exceptional answers which demonstrated detailed knowledge of the text and how theatre works. The best answers were creative, original, and innovative in approach. These candidates were aware of contemporary theatre practices and how audiences respond. Original production conditions and context were covered succinctly and were relevant to their answer. The weakest answers only discussed one extract. Many spent too much time discussing the original production and context. Some discussed LX and SFX and costume which was not required. Others were descriptive and did not focus on why they had created the set in such a way. Some forgot to mention props. Stage shape was often forgotten as was the style of the design. Many stated a design style but described a set that was not in that style.
- (iii) As with question A(ii) many only discussed one production. The best answers were clear about the influences and what aspects they had used in their design. This is the last question, and many were clearly struggling to complete the paper. Many candidates lost marks by only giving short, descriptive answers.

Summary of key points

The standards overall were good and were a testament to the hard work of centres in what has been a challenging period for these candidates. The main points from the paper are:

- Candidates need to adapt their knowledge to the question being asked.
- Candidates need to cover the whole extract.
- There is no need for original production and cultural context in each question.
- Candidates need to practise in timed conditions before the day of the examination.
- The best answers were individual, creative answers rather than pre-determined.



WJEC
245 Western Avenue
Cardiff CF5 2YX
Tel No 029 2026 5000
Fax 029 2057 5994
E-mail: exams@wjec.co.uk
website: www.wjec.co.uk