

Teaching guide: Technical guidance for the component 2 written exam paper

The advice and guidance below will help you to prepare your students for component 2 of the written exam paper for GCSE Dance (8236).

How can I prepare my students for component 2 of the written paper?

The new specification encourages a holistic approach to knowledge and understanding of GCSE Dance as an art form. Students learn much of the theoretical knowledge through practical application.

Words like embedded, integrated, combined and cohesive describe the style of teaching that works for this specification. In the specimen paper, the questions and specimen answers are very different to the style of the current specification. This means you need to teach it in a very different way.

Before the exam, students won't know which four of the six works studied will be referenced for questions for Section C. Nor will they know in advance which particular defining characteristics will be considered. Given the range of possibilities for the questions, students must be prepared to draw on a broad knowledge and understanding of each work.

This is best facilitated through practical application, experimentation, and engagement in lots of discussion about the works. Encourage your students to have a very clear and comprehensive understanding of the subject content as detailed in Section 3 of the specification.

Our website features resource materials to support your teaching. They are the definitive resources for the GCSE Dance Anthology and provide all the information you need to prepare your students for the written paper.

Resources include:

- filmed versions of the professional works
- an interview with the choreographer or associate of each work
- a transcript of the interview
- fact files for each of the works
- a tabular overview of the GCSE Dance Anthology
- subject specific vocabulary
- a list of command words that will be used in questions on the paper.

What will the component 2 written exam paper look like?

Our specimen paper and mark scheme provide a blueprint for the format, style, and type of questions, along with mark schemes that will comprise all future papers. Students will be provided with a combined question paper and answer booklet in the examination, with space after each question to write their answer.

How do I know what will comprise a good answer on the paper?

Specimen answers are exemplified in the specimen mark scheme provided by AQA.

As there are no SPG marks on the written paper, will students be given the benefit of the doubt for phonetic spellings?

Yes, providing the response is clear and unambiguous.

Unison and canon appear in the subject content only as a choreographic device. If my students refer to unison and canon as a relationship, will they be penalised?

Students are expected to acknowledge unison and canon as a choreographic device, as this is where the term appears in the specification subject content. They won't be penalised if they also refer to unison and canon as a relationship.

Section A and B

Will the paper always start with a hypothetical choreography?

Yes, the written paper will always start with a hypothetical choreography, and this provides a great start for students of all abilities as it is a creative exercise which draws on practical experience and application using an unseen stimulus. Practice in doing this kind of task would be beneficial to students.

Should I teach my student the definitions of dance terms in the subject content?

The subject content in Section 3 of the specification details the knowledge, understanding and skills that students are expected to learn during the course of study. Students should be entirely familiar with definitions of all the terminology used in the subject content. A glossary has been provided for you by AQA.

Could Safe Practice come up on the written paper? If so, how much detail should I cover under nutrition and hydration?

Section A of the written paper fulfills Assessment Objective 3: Knowledge and Understanding of Choreographic Processes and Performing Skills.

Questions will relate to:

- knowledge and understanding of choreographic processes which will be assessed through the medium of a hypothetical choreography question
- knowledge and understanding of performing skills which will be assessed through short answer questions.

Questions about all aspects of safe practice in the subject content could come up in this section and the level of detail required in the answer will have a direct correlation to the number of marks in the question.

All questions in this section will be short answer, so students will need to have knowledge and understanding of what the terms mean and their relevance in a performing context.

Section B of the written paper fulfills part of Assessment Objective 4: Critically appreciate own work. Questions will relate to students' own experience of performance, or choreography or both during the course. The content that should be covered is indicated in Section 3.1 and 3.3.1 of the specification and students should be prepared to describe, analyse, interpret, evaluate and reflect on the content as indicated in the right hand box to demonstrate what they know and understand about the meanings of relevant terminology. Questions about safe practice (process) could also come up in this section in relation to the students' own work.

Will candidates be asked about aspects of the set phrases?

Section B of the written paper fulfills part of Assessment Objective 4: Critically appreciate own work. Questions will relate to students' own experience of performance, or choreography or both during the course. The content is indicated in Section 3.3.1 of the specification and students should therefore be prepared to describe, analyse, interpret, evaluate and reflect on the content as indicated in the right hand box to demonstrate what they know and understand about the contribution of performance to audience understanding of the work being performed. The set phrases and the duo/trio are part of the performing experience during the course, so students could be expected to answer questions about them.

Section C

Where will I find information about what aspects of the six professional works my students will need to know in order to answer the questions?

The specific content that students will need to know is indicated in a table in the specification in section 3.3.2. This details what's meant by the defining characteristics of each professional work. The outcome of the study of the defining characteristics is summarised at the end of that section:

To critically appreciate professional works through describing, analysing, interpreting, evaluating and reflecting, students must know and understand:

- the similarities and differences between the defining characteristics of each dance
- the contribution of choreography, performance and features of production to the audience's understanding of the work
- the relationships between choreography, performance and features of production and the ways in which these have been used together to enhance audience understanding of the choreographic intention (of the work)
- the purpose or significance of different performance environments in which the dance was created or performed.

What level of detail do my students need to know in order to be able to answer the questions?

To best appreciate the extent of specific detail required in a student response, it might be helpful to consider the time advisory for this section. Students are advised to spend 35 minutes on Section C and as an example, the specimen paper requires responses to two short answer, one explanatory and two discursive questions.

As detailed in the specification, students must study all six works in their entirety and be prepared to analyse, interpret, evaluate and reflect on the works in response to short answer and extended writing questions. Section C of the written paper fulfils part of Assessment Objective 4: Critically appreciate professional works, through making analytical, interpretative and evaluative judgements. This is key to understanding what is being assessed in a student's response.

Are there any set motifs in the works that my students must learn in order to be able to answer the questions?

There is no requirement for students to learn any specific or 'set' motifs from the professional works.

How do I know what will comprise a good answer in Section C?

In a level of response mark scheme we reward the ability to engage with the works and thread ideas together into a coherent and reasoned point of view. Typical answers are exemplified in the specimen mark scheme provided by AQA. For example in q21, the descriptor for a top-level response is:

Discussion is excellent: convincing analysis, interpretation and evaluation of similarities and differences in how costume is used to enhance appreciation of the two works.

The specimen mark scheme then goes on in the next column to exemplify what a top level response might look like, and examples of responses to the descriptors in the specimen mark scheme show you how we will differentiate.

In the specimen paper it refers to "theme", but in the Fact Files for the works in the anthology there is no mention of theme so how can my students be expected to know this?

On page 12 sec 3.1.2.1 of the specification content there is a definition of Choreographic Intent. The reference to theme in the specimen paper is therefore as a defining characteristic of Choreographic Intent and the Choreographic Intent of each of work is indicated in the Fact Files.

I don't have sufficient money in my department budget to buy any of the packs being produced by companies and other organisations. Will my students be disadvantaged?

AQA has provided a number of comprehensive resources to support each of the professional works. They can be found on the AQA website and on eAQA. Together they make up the definitive resources for the study of this specification and provide all the information teachers need. Any further knowledge gleaned from materials created by other providers will not be considered essential to a student's knowledge and understanding of the work.

Will AQA refer to names of specific sections in the questions and will my students need to know these?

None of the questions will refer to specific named sections. In order to critically appreciate, students must examine and evaluate from a discerning point of view, so there will be no requirement to recall facts such as the names of sections, or of motifs or of lighting designers etc. Therefore, a student who refers by name to a section of a work, which has not been specifically named in the AQA

resources, will not be advantaged over a student who does not refer to that particular section by name.

Will my students be disadvantaged if they don't know about and study the other sections in the full version of Artificial Things?

No. The GCSE Dance Anthology on eAQA provides the definitive version for each of the six works being studied for the purposes of answering questions in GCSE Dance. Students can access the full range of marks available in the written examination from studying this definitive version. It is their analytical, interpretive and evaluative skills that are being assessed in this section of the paper.

How can I best prepare my students for discursive responses to questions?

Your students will need to learn to be able to think quickly for themselves, and understand what the question is asking them to analyse, interpret and evaluate. Engaging with them, enthusing about the works and empowering them to discuss answers to questions orally in class, in groups and pairs and from personal experience and participation will give them confidence to do this in the examination. You might also want to give your students some idea of how to tackle discursive questions by providing them with an understanding of how to plan efficiently and quickly in the examination and how to best present key points with supporting evidence. It would also be advisable to get your students to try out some timed responses to a range of questions in the style of the specimen paper.

The Internet in my school is very poor quality; can I get a DVD of the GCSE Dance Anthology?

No, you will not be able to get a legal DVD of the whole GCSE Dance Anthology. This is because the works are the copyright property of the companies who provided them for the purposes of study, and nobody else has a licence to copy them.

Anyone who does could potentially be prosecuted for breach of copyright. To facilitate the study of a broad a range of professional dance works, we've negotiated free access for teachers to all six of the Anthology works. If the Internet isn't reliable in your school, it could be difficult for your students to view the complete works as consistently as you would wish, but this is an issue for your centre to resolve, not AQA.

In the first instance, you should go back to your Examinations Officer to discuss the problems you're experiencing. Some of the companies in the Anthology have

the works available on DVD to purchase, and you can approach them directly, but there will of course be costs associated with this and you must check that the version being sold commercially is the same as the version on eAQA which is the definitive version for the purposes of the study of GCSE Dance.

Should I continue to use the AQA book that was written for the current specification?

It is understood that during 2017 the publishers will cease publication of the current textbook, AQA GCSE Dance. Much of the content continues to be relevant, so you can still use this book if you have copies, but you would need to cross-reference it to the subject content of the new specification and the resources that we offer on our website and on eAQA.