

## **GCSE Drama notes and guidance: NEA 2021**

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As a result of the changes to specifications for 2021, we've produced this notes and guidance document to help you to understand how the marking criteria will be different this year.

All changes to mark schemes **appear in red**, content that has been removed has been **struck through**. Further guidance is provided in the footnotes.

The Appendices contain further information regarding alternative evidence, guidance on devising monologues and frequently asked questions.

## Component 2 – the devising log – Section 3 (section 4.5.1 of the specification)

| Band | Mark  | Description   |
|------|-------|---|
| 4    | 16-20 | <p><b>Excellent</b> analysis and evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• response demonstrates highly developed skills in identifying and investigating how far they developed their theatrical skills and how successfully they contributed to the devising process and to the final devised piece (analysis)<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• response demonstrates highly developed skills in assessing the merit of different approaches and formulating judgements about the overall impact they had as an individual (evaluation)</li> <li>• response is critical and insightful</li> <li>• points are comprehensively explored and supported in depth with thorough exemplification.</li> </ul> |
| 3    | 11-15 | <p><b>Good</b> analysis and evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• response demonstrates developed and secure skills in identifying and investigating how far they developed their theatrical skills and how successfully they contributed to the devising process and to the final devised piece (analysis)</li> <li>• response demonstrates developed and secure skills in assessing the merit of different approaches and formulating judgements about the overall impact they had as an individual (evaluation)</li> <li>• response is developed and clear</li> <li>• points are explored and supported with a number of examples.</li> </ul>   |
| 2    | 6-10  | <p><b>Reasonable</b> analysis and evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• response demonstrates some developing skill in identifying and investigating how far they developed their theatrical skills, and how successfully they contributed to the devising process and to the final devised piece (analysis)</li> <li>• response demonstrates some developing skill in assessing the merit of different approaches and formulating judgements about the overall impact they had as an individual (evaluation)</li> <li>• response is reasonably clear but at points relies on description</li> <li>• points made are sound but may not be explored or supported.</li> </ul>                |

<sup>1</sup> Regarding the phrase ‘...how successfully they contributed to the devising process and to the final devised piece’ in the first bullet point in each level, students working on their own (rather than in a group) must make sure that they explain clearly how their ideas for their selected specialism contributed to the final individual devised monologue piece.

|   |     |  |
|---|-----|--|
| 1 | 1-5 | <p><b>Limited</b> analysis and evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• response demonstrates undeveloped skills in identifying and investigating how far they developed their theatrical skills, and how successfully they contributed to the devising process and to the final devised piece (analysis)</li> <li>• response demonstrates undeveloped skills in assessing the merit of different approaches and formulating judgements about the overall impact they had as an individual (evaluation)</li> <li>• response is mostly descriptive and lacks examples.</li> </ul> |
| 0 | 0   | Nothing worthy of credit.  |

Please note, students working on their own (rather than in a group) do not have to analyse and evaluate 'the benefits they brought to the pair/group' (section 4.2 of the specification) in Section 3 of the devising log.

## Component 2 - Marking the devised performance (section 4.5.1 of the specification)

| Mark | Level of theatrical skill <sup>2</sup>   | Range of theatrical skills demonstrated                   | Contribution to the effectiveness of the piece | Inventiveness of individual's work                   | Success in realising/explaining individual artistic intentions <sup>3</sup>        |
|------|--|---|--|--|--|
| 4    | <b>Highly competent, highly developed and sustained</b> use/explanation of theatrical skill.           | <b>Extensive</b> range of theatrical skills demonstrated. | <b>Outstandingly effective piece.</b>          | <b>Highly inventive</b> work throughout.             | <b>Highly successful</b> realisation/explanation of individual artistic intention. |
| 3    | <b>Developed, secure and consistent</b> use/explanation of theatrical skill.                           | <b>Wide</b> range of theatrical skills demonstrated.      | <b>Considerably effective piece.</b>           | Work has <b>many inventive qualities</b> or moments. | <b>Secure success</b> in realising/explaining individual artistic intention.       |
| 2    | <b>Some developing competency</b> in use/explanation of theatrical skill, <b>not always sustained.</b> | <b>Fair</b> range of theatrical skills demonstrated.      | <b>Fairly effective piece.</b>                 | <b>Some useful inventive ideas</b>                   | <b>Some success</b> in realising/explaining individual artistic intention.         |
| 1    | <b>Little competency and little consistency</b> in use/explanation of theatrical skill.                | <b>Narrow</b> range of theatrical skills demonstrated.    | <b>Piece has little effectiveness.</b>         | <b>Little inventiveness.</b>                         | <b>Little success</b> in realising/explaining individual artistic intention.       |

<sup>2</sup> Regarding the 'Level of theatrical skill' column of the mark scheme, students and teachers are directed to Appendix A, which details the full list of alternative evidence that should be used in the place of a live performance to demonstrate students' theatrical skills.

<sup>3</sup> Regarding the 'Success in realising individual artistic intention' column of the mark scheme, students and teachers are directed to Appendix A, which details the full list of alternative evidence that should be used in the place of a live performance to demonstrate students' artistic intentions.

|   |                           |                           |                           |                           |                           |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 0 | Nothing worthy of credit. |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|

We are aware that there may be some cases where students' monologues do not match the content in the devising log because they created full pieces last year, but never performed them, despite completing the devising log. In such cases, students should include a short paragraph at the end of the devising log explaining the reasons for the differences and how/why they changed and altered their practical work.

## Component 3 – Performance of Extract(s) (section 4.5.2 of the specification)

| Band | Mark  | Description   |
|------|-------|---|
| 4    | 16-20 | <p><b>Excellent</b> contribution to performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an extensive range of skills are demonstrated</li> <li>• skills are deployed/<b>explained</b> precisely and in a highly effective way<sup>4</sup></li> <li>• personal interpretation is entirely appropriate to the play as a whole</li> <li>• personal interpretation is highly sensitive to context</li> <li>• artistic intentions are entirely achieved.</li> </ul>            |
| 3    | 11-15 | <p><b>Good</b> contribution to performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wide range of skills are demonstrated</li> <li>• skills are deployed/<b>explained</b> confidently and in a mostly effective way</li> <li>• personal interpretation exhibits a good degree of appropriateness to the play as a whole</li> <li>• personal interpretation exhibits a good degree of sensitivity to context</li> <li>• artistic intentions are mostly achieved.</li> </ul> |
| 2    | 6-10  | <p><b>Reasonable</b> contribution to performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fair range of skills are demonstrated</li> <li>• skills are deployed/<b>explained</b> with care and with effectiveness in places</li> <li>• personal interpretation has some relevance to the play as a whole</li> <li>• personal interpretation is sensitive to context in places</li> <li>• artistic intentions are partly achieved.</li> </ul>                                |

<sup>4</sup> Regarding the 'Skills are deployed' bullet point of the mark scheme, students and teachers are directed to Appendix B, which details the full list of alternative evidence that should be used in the place of a live performance to demonstrate students' theatrical skills.

|   |     |  |
|---|-----|--|
| 1 | 1-5 | <p><b>Limited</b> contribution to performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• narrow range of skills are demonstrated</li> <li>• skills are deployed/<b>explained</b> uncertainly with little effectiveness</li> <li>• personal interpretation lacks appropriateness for the play as a whole</li> <li>• personal interpretation lacks sensitivity to context</li> <li>• artistic intentions are achieved to a minimal extent.</li> </ul> |
| 0 | 0   | Nothing worthy of credit.  |

Please note that the 'Guidance on key extracts' provided on section 4.2 of the specification remains the same whether students are performing one or two extracts (including monologues).

Also, note that students who perform/explore one extract will not be disadvantaged. We know that some centres have already worked on (or prepared) both extracts. Therefore, if a centre chooses to submit both we will mark both, but only use the highest mark that will be doubled. If centres only submit one, we will double that mark.

## Appendix A – Alternative evidence for Component 2 (Devising)

Evidence must include either audio-visual recordings of complete performances or alternative evidence including one or more of the following, as appropriate. No other forms of alternative evidence will be accepted:

Alternative evidence for **performers** must include both of the following. No other forms of alternative evidence will be accepted:

- audio-visual recording of some acting performance without the need for fully designed set/lighting/costumes. This could include recorded rehearsals or physical demonstrations of key aspects
- detailed explanation of the effects students would have wished to create and the theatrical skills/methods they would have employed in order to do so in the final live performance. This could be audio-visual or written.

Alternative evidence for **designers** must include one or more of the following, as appropriate. No other forms of alternative evidence will be accepted:

- prototype of product – to clearly demonstrate key design features that would be realised in the final product
- original and non-original photography – to clearly demonstrate either students' own realised designs or effects that they would want to emulate from live theatre productions
- drawings or annotated sketches of designs – to clearly demonstrate the key features of the design eg size, shape, fit, effect etc
- annotated scripts – to clearly demonstrate cues and effects throughout the performance
- video or written account – a detailed explanation of the effects students would have wished to create and the theatrical skills/methods they would have employed in order to do so in the final live performance
- physical demonstrations – an audio-visual recording to clearly demonstrate:
  - how costumes fit and move
  - sound effects
  - lighting effects
  - set design
  - size, shape and operation of puppets.

## Appendix B – Alternative evidence for Component 3 (Text-based)

Evidence must include either a complete and unedited audio-visual recording of the text-based performance and/or presentation of each discrete aspect/each student's individual contribution.

Alternative evidence for **performers** must include the following. No other forms of alternative evidence will be accepted:

- audio-visual recording of acting performance without need for fully designed set/lighting/costumes.

Alternative evidence for **designers** must include one or more of the following, as appropriate (no other forms of alternative evidence will be accepted):

- prototype of product – to clearly demonstrate key design features that would be realised in the final product
- original photography – to clearly demonstrate students' own realised designs
- drawings or annotated sketches of designs – to clearly demonstrate the key features of the design eg size, shape, fit, effect etc
- annotated scripts – to clearly demonstrate cues and effects throughout the performance
- video or written account – a detailed explanation of the effects students would have wished to create and the theatrical skills/methods they would have employed in order to do so in the final live performance
- physical demonstrations – an audio-visual recording to clearly demonstrate:
  - how costumes fit and move
  - sound effects
  - lighting effects
  - set design
  - size, shape and operation of puppets.

## Appendix C – Guidance on devising monologues

Below we have reproduced the guidance on devising from sections 3.2.1, 3.2.2 and 4.2 of the specification. We have indicated (in red) where the guidance has been adapted to allow for monologue submissions.

### 3.2.1 Creating devised drama

Students must learn how to create and develop ideas to communicate meaning in a devised theatrical performance.

Students must draw on and demonstrate a practical understanding of the subject content listed in Knowledge and understanding (section 3.1.1 of the specification).

Students must develop their ability to:

- carry out research
- develop their own ideas
- collaborate with others (for groups of 2-6)
- rehearse, refine and amend their work in progress
- analyse and evaluate their own process of creating devised drama.

For assessment, students must produce an individual Devising log documenting their devising process and an analysis and evaluation of their contribution.

Students working on their own (rather than in a group) must make sure that they explain clearly how their ideas for their selected specialism contributed to the final individual devised monologue piece.

See the devising log (section 4.2 of the specification] for details.

### 3.2.2 Performing devised drama

Students must learn how to contribute to devised drama in a live theatre context for an audience. They must contribute as either a performer or designer. Students must draw on and demonstrate a practical understanding of the subject content listed in Knowledge and understanding (section 3.1.1 of the specification). They must develop their ability to:

- create and communicate meaning
- realise artistic intention in devised drama.

For assessment, students must perform or create realised designs for a devised monologue, duologue or group piece. See the devised performance (section 4.2 of the specification) for details.

## 4.2 Component 2: Devising drama

This is a practical component in which students are assessed on their ability to create and develop ideas to communicate meaning for theatrical performance (AO1), apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance (AO2) and analyse and evaluate their own work (AO4).

Component 2 constitutes 40% of the GCSE. It is marked by teachers and moderated by AQA. For this component, students are required to complete the following **two** assessment tasks:

- produce an individual Devising log documenting the devising process
- contribute to a final devised **monologue**, duologue or group performance.

The devising log is marked out of 60. Each student's contribution to the final devised performance is marked out of 20.

### Guidance on devising

The starting point for the devised piece must be arrived at in the following way:

1. teacher presents students with a range of stimuli
2. students select one or more on which to base their devised piece.

These stimuli may be, but are not limited to, the following:

- visual (such as a photograph, painting or sculpture)
- printed or spoken word (such as a poem, news article, story or novel)
- musical (such as a song, melody or instrumental piece)
- fact-based (such as a current, political or historical event)
- theme or issue-based (such as conflict, relationships, justice or freedom)
- myths (such as folklore or urban myth)
- cultural (such as traditions or festivals).

We recommend that students choose one or more genres or performance styles for their devised piece, but this is not a mandatory requirement. Genres and performance styles include but are not limited to:

- comedy
- tragedy
- melodrama
- commedia dell'arte
- naturalism
- epic theatre
- documentary theatre
- physical theatre.

## Specialisms

Each student must choose to be assessed as one of the following:

- performer
- lighting designer
- sound designer
- set designer
- costume designer
- puppet designer.

Costume designers may choose to include make-up and/or hair and/or masks. Set designers may choose to include design of props.

Each student must choose **one** specialism only.

They are assessed in relation to this specialism for both the devising log and devised performance.

Requirements in relation to the number of students per specialism are as follows:

| Specialism        | Requirement for each performance    |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Performer         | Between <b>one</b> and six students |
| Lighting designer | Maximum of <b>one</b> student       |
| Sound designer    | Maximum of <b>one</b> student       |
| Set designer      | Maximum of <b>one</b> student       |
| Costume designer  | Maximum of <b>one</b> student       |
| Puppet designer   | Maximum of <b>one</b> student       |

In the case of only two students entering, both students must nominate themselves as performer.

Cross-sex casting is permitted.

Students must apply their chosen specialism as follows:

| Specialism        | Requirement   |
|-------------------|---|
| Performer         | Must develop and perform <b>one</b> character <sup>5</sup>  |
| Lighting designer | Must create <b>one</b> lighting design. The design must show a range of lighting effects/states and cues/transitions designed to meet the demands of the devised piece being performed. |

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<sup>5</sup> Or more than one if appropriate to the subject matter and performance style of the piece.

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Sound designer   | Must create <b>one</b> sound design. The design must show a range of sound effects and cues/transitions designed to meet the demands of the devised piece being performed.                                     |
| Set designer     | Must create <b>one</b> set design. The design must be for one setting, showing dressings and props designed to meet the demands of the devised piece being performed.  |
| Costume designer | Must create <b>one</b> costume design for one performer. The design must show clothing and accessories (and hair and make-up if applicable) designed to meet the demands of the devised piece being performed. |
| Puppet designer  | Must create <b>one</b> puppet design. The design must show a complete puppet designed to meet the demands of the devised piece being performed.  |

Teachers must ensure that students have the opportunity to take an equal and active part in the creative and collaborative devising process regardless of their chosen specialism.

All designs must be assessed in live performance:

- for lighting designers the lights and lighting effects must be seen in the live performance
- for sound designers the sound and sound effects must be heard in the live performance
- for set designers the set seen in the live performance should follow the student's design
- for costume designers the costume designed must be worn in the live performance by the relevant character
- for puppet designers the puppet designed must be a part of the live performance.

Design students are not assessed on their ability to operate equipment associated with their design. Therefore, although all students are encouraged to develop their theatrical skills to their full potential, the following apply:

- lighting designers are not required to operate the lighting equipment in the live performance
- sound designers are not required to operate the sound equipment in the live performance
- set designers are not assessed on the set's construction
- costume designers are not assessed on the costume's construction
- puppet designers are not assessed on the puppet's construction and need not be the puppet operators during the live performance.

Assessors must assess the design and not its execution.

Designs should be realised in performance to the full extent possible within any practical constraints. Design students should have an awareness of how their design will impact on the live performance as a whole.

## The Devising log

Each student is required to complete a Devising log documenting the creation and development of their ideas to communicate meaning through a devised piece, and analysing and evaluating their individual contribution to the devising process and the final devised piece.

The Devising log must comprise three sections, each marked out of 20:

- Section 1: Response to a stimulus
- Section 2: Development and collaboration (If students are working on a devised monologue then Section 2 should focus on the development of the devised monologue)
- Section 3: Analysis and evaluation.

### Section 1: Response to a stimulus

In this section, students are expected to explain their initial ideas, research and intentions for the devised piece. The student must explain:

- their initial response to the stimuli presented by the teacher and the stimulus they chose
- the ideas, themes and settings they have considered for the devised piece in response to the stimulus they chose
- their research findings
- their own dramatic aims and intentions
- the dramatic aims and intentions of the piece as a whole.

### Section 2: Development and collaboration

If students are working on a devised monologue then Section 2 should focus on the development of the devised monologue.

In this section students are expected to explain the process they undertook to refine their initial ideas and intentions into a final devised piece.

The student must explain:

- how they developed and refined their own ideas and, if working in a group of 2-6, those of the pair/group
- how they developed and refined the piece in rehearsal
- how they developed and refined their own theatrical skills during the devising process
- how they responded to feedback
- how they as individuals used their refined theatrical skills and ideas in the final piece.

### Section 3: Analysis and evaluation

This section offers students the opportunity to demonstrate their analytical and evaluative skills with respect to their own devised work. Students are expected to analyse and evaluate the ways in which they individually contributed to the devising process as a whole and to the final devised piece, exploring their strengths and the learning opportunities taken from the experience. Students should analyse and evaluate:

- how far they developed their theatrical skills
- the benefits they brought to the pair/group and the way in which they positively shaped the outcome
- the overall impact they had as individuals.

Students should also appraise those areas for further development in their future devising work (ie the aspects that did not go as well as they'd hoped).

Please note that students working on their own (rather than in a group) do not have to analyse and evaluate 'the benefits they brought to the pair/group' in Section 3 of the devising log.

In the context of this section:

- to 'analyse' is to identify and investigate
- to 'evaluate' is to assess the merit of the different approaches used and formulate judgements.

## Appendix D – Frequently asked questions

### **What is the maximum length for a devised monologue in component 2?**

We suggest a maximum length of 5 minutes and students will not be penalised for exceeding this.

### **For component 2, Devising drama, how do students write about collaboration in the devising log if they're creating a monologue?**

If they're creating a monologue, there is no requirement to write about collaboration in the devising log and, in Section 3, students who are doing a monologue do not have to 'analyse and evaluate the benefits they brought to the pair/group.'

Students can write about their ideas and how they refined them. They could refer to their initial ideas and creative intentions and discuss how their exploration of ideas helped them communicate these intentions. They could consider what influenced their ideas and how they practically developed and realised them.

### **For a monologue in component 2, do students have to meet the devising log word count if they don't need to write about collaboration?**

We are still assessing most of the same things we normally would – students still have to talk about their devising process as per the specification including responding to a stimulus, creating ideas to communicate meaning, refining their devising piece, development (not collaboration if students are doing a monologue), analysis and evaluation.

No change has been made to the suggested length of the Devising log, as published in the specification.

There is no suggested minimum length (2500 words maximum). The suggested length per section is 400-600 words.

Because there is no minimum requirement in the specification – only a total suggested length – our examiners will be aware and accept that students completing monologues may have shorter work than the suggestion and students will not be penalised.

### **For component 2, my students' monologues will not match their Devising logs. They created full pieces last year, the final performance wasn't filmed but they did get the log done. Therefore, when we alter the performances to make them COVID-safe they will no longer match the Devising logs.**

We will accept this and we won't ask centres to redo work in the current climate. Students will need to include a short paragraph at the end of the Devising log explaining the reasons for the differences and how/why they changed and altered their practical work.

### **Students were just about to perform their Devised pieces in March 2020 when we went into lockdown. Some virtually completed their logs during lockdown, however, on return we wanted to rehearse and record pieces to get them out of the way and move on –but now students are self-isolating. What do we submit?**

They will need to submit alternative evidence if they do not have a final performance or are unable to produce monologues.

### **For component 3, Texts in practice, will students who perform only one extract be disadvantaged?**

No, the following will apply in order not to disadvantage students:

- if students are completing and submitting two extracts then the highest mark they receive will be doubled
- if students are completing one extract then the mark they receive for this one extract will be doubled.

**For component 3, Texts in practice, if students are only submitting one extract, why do they still need to identify a second extract and where do they record the details of this?**

Students select two extracts in order to ensure that they continue to give consideration to the whole play and to also ensure that the extracts come from a play of appropriate length. They record details of both extracts on the Statement of Dramatic Intentions.

**How much recorded footage should be provided for alternative evidence submissions?**

You should include the recorded evidence which most closely matches the final performance. This could be:

- a dress rehearsal or run-through rehearsal
- if a such footage is not available, recorded evidence of the student working on the assessment material (either in class or at home, working on the sections of the performance they were involved in). You will be asked to collate different sections of footage into one file or submit each section, clearly identified by the file title and detailed on the accompanying paperwork. The footage should evidence the student once in each moment of the performance that is available rather than contain several versions of the same moment.

**If a group perform the whole piece but have to wear masks and socially distance because of the requirements from the government where they live, will they be penalised, as you cannot see facial expressions?**

A lot of student performance work produced this year will include socially distanced performance work and this is to be expected in the current circumstances. Examiners and moderators will be trained to expect this type of work.

If wearing masks or clear visors are going to impede facial expression and, in addition, potentially vocal clarity/expression and therefore impact the marking of these key performance skills, it is recommended that this is submitted as alternative evidence and supporting information is added for clarity where needed.

**Do we still have to apply the 5-year rule in 2021?**

We've permanently removed the '5-year rule' for the use of digital or streamed productions in the written exam for our drama qualifications. The change will take place with immediate effect and will mean that for exams from 2021 onwards, students will be able to refer to any digital or streamed production in their response to the live theatre production section of the written paper.

**Are any of these changes being applied to the Y10 cohort?**

Apart from the removal of the 5-year rule all changes apply to students entering in 2021 only.