



Notes and Guidance: Practical guidance for non-exam assessment

Component 3: Texts in practice (8261/X)

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Introduction

Component 3 is a practical component in which students are assessed on their ability to apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance.

Component 3 is marked by AQA. The assessment of Component 3 is undertaken by a visiting examiner. Each student is assessed on the performance of two key extracts from one play.

Students may take the role of a performer or of a designer. They can present their extracts in the form of monologues, duologues or group performances, or a combination of those.

Component 3 makes up 20% of the GCSE.

Play approval

The purpose of the play approval process is to check the texts being performed for Component 3 offer the required breadth and contrast to the set text being studied for Component 1.

Prohibited play combinations are given on pages 31 and 32 in the [specification](#).

The play approval process

It is helpful to seek approval for the play choices as soon as possible, as this gives time for any changes that may be required. Non-exam assessment (NEA) advisors are not permitted to suggest texts; however, they can clarify if a text would be approved alongside a specific set text.

AQA will not refuse a text for other reasons, it is a centre's responsibility to check the text being performed is considered age-appropriate by the Head of centre.

Play selection

When selecting texts, it is important to consider if the points under 'Guidance on key extracts' (page 30) in the [specification](#) can be met. A key consideration is if the text can facilitate a student accessing the full marks available by being, for example rich in content and context and suitable for the skills and areas of interest for their students.

Students should study the full text, and not simply the extract, so they are able to demonstrate a full appreciation of the wider context.

Play approval form

The Play approval form (PAF) is completed each year for students being examined that academic year. Your NEA advisor will direct you to the form or email you a copy. It should be the form for the correct year. Your NEA advisor will check your selected texts offer the required contrast to your set text for Component 1. If they think any of your text choices do not comply with this requirement, they will let you know why and request you select a different text.

There is no limit to the number of play choices a centre can make for Component 3 and if you need to use additional forms that is acceptable. The number of play choices you make will depend on factors such as the number of students in your centre, their skills and areas of interest and the resources available. If during the time period between having plays approved and the exam taking place you should need to change or add a text to the Play approval form, this is not a problem, you can contact your NEA advisor with an updated form, and they can approve this for you using the same criteria as before.

Your NEA advisor will initial and date the approved Play approval form and return it to you via email, and this should be provided for your visiting examiner at the right time.

Extracts 1 and 2

Each student must contribute to the performance of two extracts.

Each extract is worth 20 marks. Extract 1 is marked out of 20 and Extract 2 is marked out of 20, making 40 marks in total.

Selecting extracts

In addition to the section in the specification on what makes a key extract, it is important to consider how students will work on the extracts. This can inform whether monologues, duologues or group performances are best suited to students. It is also important to consider what can be resourced.

Running time

The running times given in the specification are per extract. It is important to meet the minimum running time for each extract to avoid a penalty being applied to the marks.

Group sizes

Page 33 of the [specification](#) outlines requirements for group sizes.

Adapting extracts

Extracts should be performed in keeping with the playwright's intentions. The meaning, stylistic qualities and style of performance should be aligned with the original artistic intentions.

Students can perform an abridged version of a suitable key extract if necessary for it to provide a coherent performance within the performance times stated, but the wording itself must not be modified.

The spec states that cross-sex casting is permitted. As with any casting choices, the important consideration is not the gender of the character but whether it will suit the candidate and enable them to demonstrate their skills effectively. The gender of the character should not be changed.

Design students

Students can offer a design specialism if they are more suited to design than performance and the specification has guidance on how many design students can work on a performance piece and what design specialisms a student can undertake. This information is on pages 33 and 34 of the [specification](#).

It is important design students are supported with the relevant teaching and learning, and design options are not used as contingency plans, for example for students with high level of absence.

Exam visit

Arranging the visit

Visiting examiners are allocated to centres after they have successfully completed the standardisation process.

Centres can expect to hear from their examiner from January onwards. If a centre requires an early visit, they should contact AQA directly from mid-October. Any queries around arranging a visit can be emailed to a your NEA advisor.

Administration

Please read the relevant sections of the specification in full so that the required preparation is in place for the external examiner visit. Your NEA advisor can answer any queries you may have after reading the specification.