



AS

Drama and Theatre

Written Paper

Report on the Examination

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General comments

Examiners reported seeing some very good work where students had clearly demonstrated an understanding, in section A, of their set text and offered entirely appropriate performance, directorial or design ideas as appropriate to the demands of the question. Similarly examiners reported seeing many responses in Section B where students had not only assimilated the demands of the questions but also applied their knowledge of the context of the productions seen to the question as set.

There is one significant general point that relates to the paper as a whole:

Timing

It is crucial that students (and teachers) recognise the need to consider the timing of the paper. Although there are four questions to answer in two hours, the weighting of the marks indicates that slightly longer should be spent on Section A than Section B, however each question in both sections carries the same number of marks and should therefore be treated equally – this was often not the case and many students produced very unbalanced responses. Each question carries its own specific requirements and is assessed against different objectives, the more students can become familiar with these, the greater likelihood they have of producing answers that meet the focus of the question.

In both Sections A and B several students repeated their introductory statements: of social, cultural and historical context in A, and an explanation of venue, title, date and production style in B. This was sometimes undertaken word for word, which wasted valuable time.

Section A (Drama through the ages)

Introductions and Contextual Knowledge

The most successful introductions revealed to examiners that students had a clear understanding of the context of the play in relation to the focus of the question and were also able to place the section into the context of the play, this was particularly relevant to Part Two of Section A where some students gave so little information regarding their choice of section that examiners, at times, could not determine exactly what section had been chosen and also why it had been chosen.

Whilst it is important for the student to demonstrate contextual knowledge, a page (or sometimes more) of generic information relating to the background to the play or its genre rarely allowed the student the time to then fully answer the question as set. The most successful responses were those where the knowledge was embedded into the body of the answer at appropriate moments.

Teachers should remind their students that in Part Two of the question, there is no requirement to include references to social, cultural or historical context.

Focus

As is common to all questions on this paper, students are expected to write to the specific focus of the question – where this is left open, for example in questions that ask for an audience response; it is the students' responsibility to ensure that this is clearly identified. In cases where there was little reference to the focus of the question, responses were generalized and lacking in precision. The focus of the question is there to support the student, i.e. in the time allotted it should enable a well-prepared student to write about only one aspect of the play.

Students should also note that in questions that demand an audience response, this should be

considered actively rather than merely suggesting what an audience should see or understand about a character. Conversely some students emphasised the audience response in questions that did not require this, thereby resulting in a lack of focus.

Use of sketches

As a reminder, sketches are required for answers to questions on design – these sketches should support the student's answer and not be a replacement for it. Conversely many students included set design sketches for performance-based questions, these were rarely of any use and in most cases were a waste of valuable time.

Strategies for conveying meaning

In terms of fulfilling this requirement of the mark scheme, students would be well advised to consider the appropriateness of their ideas and their compatibility with either the characters' function or the action of the section. Strategies should be linked closely to the text and there should be recognition of what is possible in relation to the skills of an actor or a designer. Some students either offered implausible suggestions for the character or failed to recognise the limits of an actor's capabilities. There was also much assertion, particularly in relation to the creation of comedy.

The best responses offered a degree of precision when discussing the ways in which a performer used their vocal and physical attributes to deliver the text. All too frequently students made comments relating to pitch, tone and volume that not only appeared to reveal a lack of understanding as to the function of an actor but also relied heavily on assertion to create the desired effect.

Handling of the section

Teachers should be reminded that in instances where there are a variety of different versions of the texts available, to check the AQA Drama and Theatre website for the list of texts that have been used to set the questions for Section A. In most cases, however, examiners reported being able to identify the students' chosen sections for Part Two of the Section A questions.

The length of section specified for Part One varies according to text but the marking criteria is the same; in order to avoid a 'disjointed' response, students should aim to work methodically through the section avoiding a 'snapshot' approach (as in, 'my first moment, my second moment etc.). Too often students spent far too long on the opening of the section with the result being that they then only touched upon other, and often, more significant elements of the text.

For Part Two, students should be reminded of the rubric on the front of the exam paper, that a 'section is defined as a continuous unit of action, interaction, monologue or dialogue extending **beyond** a single page of text.' Examiners reported instances of students writing about less than this, which clearly limited the success of the response.

Transpositions

Some students attempted to relocate their productions to what appear to be quite bizarre and certainly difficult to justify settings. Whilst these on occasions might be appropriate, the time that it takes to justify the choice would be better employed in tackling the specified section of the play. In general it was only the very strongest students who were able to manage such approaches and weaker answers often offered no justification for transposing the text to a different period or country; Answers on *Antigone* provided the worst examples of this. Whilst there is no requirement for students to set their answers within the original context, it also becomes harder for them to reveal their knowledge of this in transposed settings and periods.

Terminology

Examiners reported seeing some confusion regarding theatrical terms – at this level a student should be able to identify the difference between upstage and backstage. The word ‘proxemics’ was endemic and used in ever more strange and peculiar ways, demonstrating that students clearly did not understand its meaning. In fact use of the word frequently obscured the students’ directorial or performance ideas with reference to, for example; opening, closing, widening, narrowing the proxemics when actually they would be advised to simply say ‘s/he moved closer to...’. Examiners reported seeing the word being used as a noun, a verb and an adverb. Another prime offender was the word ‘gait’ which again was rarely used (or spelt) correctly.

Antigone 01.1

This was the most popular question on the paper by some considerable way and examiners reporting seeing responses that demonstrated a good understanding of the specified extract with some useful ideas for an interpretation of Creon’s despair. On the whole students revealed a reasonably secure understanding of the social and cultural context although in some cases students wrote too much about the Dionysian festival and did not link this historical understanding to the focus of the question. A small number of students were insecure with the classical terms (e.g. hubris) and applied them incorrectly.

Weaker responses did not address the whole extract with students spending large amounts of time on Creon’s entrance, with the result that the revelation of Eurydice’s death and his response to this, received negligible attention. In several responses seen students had not considered some of the practicalities relating to performing a role, with some of the suggestions as to how Creon would carry, pick up, move or put down Haemon being very difficult to achieve by all but an athlete.

Ideas for revealing despair ranged from the subtle to the melodramatic, either of which could be deemed appropriate so long as they were supported with precise vocal and physical details and were justified in terms of Creon’s anger at his own actions, his loss and/or his desire for death.

Where students had transposed the scene but had either failed to explain this clearly in their introduction or explained it in some detail and then never referred to it again there was often a loss of focus on the precise demands of the question with some ideas offered being not appropriate for the play as a whole.

Antigone 01.2

The majority of answers focused on Creon’s first entrance or his exchange with Haemon. Although students exhibited some appropriate knowledge, these responses tended to be shorter and less detailed than those for Part One. Many students made reference to appearance and costuming but this needed further justification in terms of the intended effects and the play as a whole.

Frequently the answers failed to develop Creon’s responses to Haemon’s or Antigone’s lines, but only dealt with his own lines, thereby limiting the impact of the chosen section. Some responses failed to explain clearly the emotion that was being portrayed resulting in the examiner having to guess this based on the, sometimes not entirely convincing, suggestion being made. As was common with other texts in this section, references to context and genre were included which were not required and did little to add to an explanation of Creon’s emotions.

Antigone 02.1

Examiners reported seeing very few answers to this question.

There was generally secure understanding of classical staging elements and some good argument for maintaining or changing staging for a 21st century audience. This was also true of 02.2. Good answers had clearly considered the impact that the chorus should have and offered appropriate ideas in both sections of the question. Ideas included choral movement, dance, singing and vocal quality. Most students had considered the number and casting of the chorus, but not all of these ideas were justified in terms of directorial intention or the extract. However only a few students had a really secure understanding of the content of the ode and its potential with many rarely commenting in any detail on mood, or the function of the ode within the play. Answers to this question were frequently unbalanced with much extraneous material at the expense of very little of the text actually being directed.

Antigone 02.2

There were a number of extracts selected, all with appropriate potential with better answers revealing some understanding of the chorus' function and the different roles they have within the text. Better answers considered detailed staging ideas including movement and delivery of lines to reveal attitude, however these were rare with many weaker answers attempting to direct the chorus in quite formulaic, synchronised movements with little reference to revealing attitude or justifying the, at times, strange ideas offered.

Much Ado About Nothing 03.1

Very few students tackled this question and those that did, whilst being able to recognise the content of the action, rarely provided full details of their set design. There were some interesting ideas and in one or two of the best answers, students offered detailed and theatrically workable sketches that demonstrated an engagement with the text and the design process. Most students were able to comment on the need to support Leonato's status but few took the opportunity to demonstrate contextual knowledge through their designs. Only the best incorporated Elizabethan concepts into modern settings, for example with the use of balcony and/or a thrust. There was some recognition of the need for a space that could accommodate a large number of actors and some appropriate ideas for using pillars and columns to allow characters to remain unseen where necessary. Design fundamentals were not always in full evidence and some designs were described in so little detail that it was hard for the examiner to visualise the students' intentions.

Much Ado About Nothing 03.2

Students chose to discuss a range of other scenes for Part Two with the most effective being Act Three Scenes One and Three, where there was recognition of the need to create opportunities for comedy.

Much Ado About Nothing 04.1

As with the previous question, this was not a particularly popular choice of text although those students that tackled it did so with a degree of understanding and invention. Unfortunately, although not a particularly long scene, many responses seen failed to move much beyond the opening, resulting in answers that failed to consider devices that actually discussed the plot to deceive. Similarly some students became embroiled in a discussion of the set design or Beatrice's

responses and consequently missed the focus to write from a performer's perspective. There was some understanding of Hero's character and some apt reference to her reasons and desire to unite Beatrice and Benedick. Some students offered very generalised observations regarding Elizabethan theatre whilst better responses made precise reference to conventions of Shakespearean comedy and to aspects of love and marriage.

Much Ado About Nothing 04.2

In Part Two most of the responses seen selected appropriate scenes from the play and were able to offer some observations as to Hero's character (for example her obedience and naivety) and the way that the preferred effects, when playing her, might serve as a contrast to Beatrice. Answers were often at their most effective when discussing her responses to the accusations made of her and her protestations of innocence.

The Servant of Two Masters 05.1

There was some appropriate understanding of the social, cultural and historical context, although some answers showed some confusion over the influence of Commedia. Most answers showed a secure understanding of Pantaloon's character and function, but some had interpreted the role as the traditional Commedia character, which was not entirely appropriate to Goldoni's version. The question asks about his relationship with Clarice and Beatrice. Many responses were unbalanced, with Beatrice receiving only brief attention. Opportunities were missed to explore his reactions to Beatrice when she is in disguise. Most students made reference to the comedy in the play. Better students offered appropriate comic direction whilst keeping a focus on the question. Weaker answers lost focus and some of the directorial ideas intended to create comedy were not well handled or particularly effective.

The Servant of Two Masters 05.2

A number of different moments were selected, most regularly Pantaloon's interaction with Dr Lombardi. Many choices offered suitable, comic potential and some ideas were detailed showing a good understanding of the play's style. There were many useful ideas for comic business, timing and slapstick. There were, however, a number of weaker answers that lacked comic potential. As with 05.1, some students had interpreted Pantaloon with the lecherous qualities of the Commedia character and there were some inappropriate ideas for characterisation and interaction with the audience.

The Servant of Two Masters 06.1

As with the previous question, there was generally secure understanding of the social, cultural and historical context. Many students chose to transpose the play to a contemporary setting; however it is insufficient to say that this allows a 21st century audience to 'connect' with the play. The transposition should add to the quality of the production and be in-keeping with the playwright's intentions. This also applies to 06.2. Some of the interpretation of Smeraldina's costume needed more justification in terms of her status and function in Pantaloon's household. She would not be in rags as a ladies' maid. There were some useful performance ideas, particularly of Smeraldina's interaction with Truffaldino outside the inn. A few students chose less appropriate moments and as with Pantaloon, a few students relied too heavily on Smeraldina's influence from the stock character of Columbina, whilst others chose to focus almost exclusively on the performance of lazzi at the expense of using the text.

The Servant of Two Masters 06.2

The majority of students chose a section of text that was appropriate to the role and showed some difference in Smeraldina's character, for example her protectiveness of Clarice. There were some useful suggestions for her characterisation and performance but a few answers were unclear as to her status as a servant and her function within the play. There were some good answers that included her derision of Silvio and her 'cheek' to Pantaloon whilst some recognized that sympathy could be created for her in her relationship with Truffaldino at the end of the play.

Hedda Gabler 07.1

This was the less frequently answered of the two questions on this popular choice of text. Most students revealed some understanding of the social, cultural and historical background to the play, although the understanding of middle class society and where Lovborg fits into this context was sometimes less well understood. There were some sensitive performance suggestions for Lovborg's first entrance, but some suggestions for his interaction with Hedda lacked subtlety. Lovborg's relationship with Tesman was often not clearly realized and the reasons for his initial embarrassment and/or self-deprecation not always fully understood or conveyed. Indeed some students believed Lovborg was there simply to brag to Tesman about his book.

Hedda Gabler 07.2

The question asked for demonstration of feeling towards either Hedda or Thea and unfortunately some students chose to write about both resulting in a rubric infringement and therefore only being credited with the section that dealt with one of the characters. Similarly in some responses there was often a lack of subtlety indicating some insecurity of the social mores of the time or insufficiently developed knowledge of character, for example, Lovborg's relationship with Thea was sometimes interpreted as being patronising, showing some restriction in understanding. There were some useful answers on Lovborg's final meeting with Hedda, which offered some detailed practical ideas and showed sensitive understanding of the complexity of the relationship.

Hedda Gabler 08.1

This was by far the more popular question on this text. There was some good understanding of the flirtatious relationship in Act Two, but weaker students offered some inappropriate responses that suggested a more sexually overt direction than would have been appropriate at this period. Understanding of "flirtatious" was dubious at times. Several students made reference to the impropriety of Judge Brack entering through the back door. The answers needed to consider the understanding of a 21st century audience. Some good answers directed a light-hearted flirtatious exchange which was usefully contrasted in 08.2. There were some useful suggestions to contrast Brack with Tesman, revealing Hedda's situation and why she engages in the flirtation. There were some appropriate costume suggestions for Hedda, but some inappropriate ideas for negligees and underwear, ignoring the historical setting and the indication in the text that she is dressed.

Hedda Gabler 08.2

There was some useful casting of the Judge, reflecting on his self-regard in his presentation and his (at least) superficial attractiveness. The majority of students chose his final interaction with Hedda and there were some useful suggestions to create disgust and repulsion in the audience. There was some detailed direction of spatial relationships and physical contact. Better answers handled the direction with some subtlety, weaker answers tended to a more overt, physically

sexual interpretation that was not always appropriate. One or two answers considered Brack's response to Hedda's death and these showed both a good understanding of the role and a sensitive response to his complex character.

The Caucasian Chalk Circle 09.1

There were some good answers to this question, showing secure interpretation and a sense of the context in which these interactions took place. Weaker answers revealed some lack of subtlety or understanding of the interactions and went from Grusha 'not knowing' Simon and being 'disgusted' by him to being totally in love, although the action is so close chronologically. There were some weaker answers that did not consider Grusha's character either in this section or throughout the play, but focused on moments in isolation, creating a lack of consistency and cohesion. 'Weakness' in one section could be contradicted by 'strength' only lines later. Some good answers explored the relationship with some insight into the teasing nature of the first encounter and with sensitivity to the characters' concerns for each other in the second. Weaker answers did not address Grusha's use of song/verse. Better answers showed an understanding of Brecht's methodology and this was applied usefully, however in many responses students offered too much context and theory, frequently incorrect or misunderstood, without reference to the question focus. This was also true of Part Two.

The Caucasian Chalk Circle 09.2

The extracts selected were all appropriate and offered the opportunity to show Grusha's determination. Better answers focused on her interaction with other characters which demonstrated her determination. There were some lively answers showing her interaction with the Peasant Woman and the Ironshirts, offering some good performance detail. Less well handled was the Chalk Circle, which was surprising. Grusha's quite taciturn responses in parts of this section were not always well interpreted in terms of both her determination and her responses to Azdak and Natella, both of which were sometimes under-developed.

The Caucasian Chalk Circle 10.1

Answers to this question were not particularly well accomplished. Many responses revealed a lack of understanding of not only Azdak's character but also his situation i.e. the incongruity of him as Judge. As a result many answers were overlong on casting and appearance and comedy, where considered, was not founded in the text but relied on some almost slapstick ideas for his relationship with the Ironshirts and Shauva. Brechtian theory was written about in great length (and as with the previous question, revealed some dubious knowledge and understanding) but rarely applied to the context of the section i.e. a discussion of concepts of wealth and corruption. Spass was frequently mentioned, but again not fully understood. Better answers did consider ways in which both the casting of the role and the delivery of the text might encourage an audience to think about the issues being presented.

The Caucasian Chalk Circle 10.2

Most students referred to the 'Chalk Circle' and offered some sense of how an audience might react to Azdak's function however there was rarely any sense of how skilfully Azdak manipulates the other characters and, consequently, a rather one-dimensional view was suggested. Concepts of justice were not always recognised and directorial ideas offered didn't always produce the desired effect as a result of a lack of detail and development.

Accidental Death of an Anarchist 11.1

Although this was not a very commonly chosen text, those students that answered on it frequently gave some interesting and well developed ideas that revealed an understanding of both the text and its distinctive style. Students generally offered clear details that revealed an understanding of the role of Pissani and his place within the hierarchy. There were some interesting performance details in terms of both his vocal and physical qualities that revealed his confusion, frustration and lack of awareness of the way in which the Maniac was manipulating him and interpretations of the role that clearly demonstrated his lack of morals and willingness to divulge police methods. In the best answers, Pissani's contribution to the comedy of the section was clearly defined. Weaker responses tended towards a narrative account of the section without adequate performance detail.

Accidental Death of an Anarchist 11.2

This part of the question was generally tackled less well than the previous one, in part due to some students' lack of clear reference to the section chosen. Several chose the section later in Act Two Scene One with the journalist but didn't make specific enough reference to the text to enable their ideas for creating comedy to be at the forefront of their answers, resulting in generalised reference to character traits. Others failed to recognise the comic potential in his joining in of the song and reversion to childhood although his inability to control others and his sycophancy did receive some attention.

Accidental Death of an Anarchist 12.1

Examiners reported seeing some very good directorial ideas in response to this question however not all of them made sufficient specific reference to the requirement to 'establish an appropriate style'. Most recognised the need to consider the pace of the action and the comic timing involved and the better answers considered the relationship with the audience. Only a very few considered the overall style, making developed reference to farce and/or satire. There was an awareness of the relationship between Bertozzo and the Constable and between Bertozzo and the Maniac and some genuinely comic details offered that went far beyond simply repeating Fo's stage directions.

Accidental Death of an Anarchist 12.2

As has been indicated previously, focus on the question is paramount to success. Unfortunately several students failed to recognize the need to discuss the Constable's lack of status and instead provided general directorial ideas which although relating to comedy didn't fulfil the precise demands of the question. Better answers clearly indicated, through a range of vocal and physical qualities, the ways in which the Constable is always a subordinate to the other officers, frequently being the butt of their jokes and to the way in which he appears to willingly adopt the role of suspect when being interviewed by the journalist. Most students were able to recognise the character's incompetency and simple mindedness although this was sometimes merely stated rather than developed practically through the delivery of the text.

Jerusalem 13.1

Several students lacked understanding of the contemporary nature of the piece, and saw no connections with current social concerns whilst others revealed some misunderstanding of style, with inappropriate reference to direct address and improvised interaction with the audience. This was offered in relation to creating comedy through the role and showed some insecurity. This was also the case in 13.2

Many responses focused almost entirely on Tanya's 'promiscuous nature' without seeing anything more to her character. A number of students referred to how she represented the 'noughties' when teenagers were 'forced' to take drugs and have sex which is an over-simplification of the historical/cultural context. Although there is some validity for this point of view, it is a considerable over-statement about the time period. Some better ones did refer to the recession and general unemployment as being factors for young people becoming disaffected but most seemed to think that Tanya and others were somehow 'forced' into their lifestyles.

Tanya was also often referred to as being 'too mature' or too 'grown up', presumably meaning that she behaves in a way that one might expect from someone older rather than from a 16 year old. This misunderstanding of the terms made little sense in the light of the comments that were made about her character. She was also often seen as someone who is only 'out for sex' which made her somewhat one-dimensional rather than a fully fleshed out character. Sadly audience response was often ignored and was sometimes seen as 'what the audience should understand about Tanya' – that she takes drugs, swears and has sex – rather than offering an actual response to the performance of the character. The most usual response suggested was 'shock' but this was often a response to Tanya's language rather than to the portrayal of her character. 'Humour' was the other response often suggested; although sometimes this was stated as being a 'response of comedy' showing a misunderstanding of what is meant by 'response', and again, this was usually linked to her language. Only stronger answers referred to a response that was achieved by their performance of Tanya; some of these more perceptive students also identified a possible response of pity towards a character whose vulnerability was brought out through the skills and strategies suggested.

Jerusalem 13.2

The majority of answers examined Tanya's relationship with Lee, with varying degrees of success. Better answers demonstrated Tanya's bravado but also the potential poignancy of the relationship with some apt performance detail. There was some useful detail of Tanya's performance of the Irish blessing and its contrast to her later sexual advance, but the context was not always understood. Some answers focused too heavily on her representation of an 'under-class' and paid insufficient attention to her practical performance. There were a few answers on her relationship with Pea, showing some understanding of their close connection. Her dominance in the relationship and her protectiveness were less well defined.

A problem encountered with this question was that several students just continued with the section they were using for 13.1. They discussed the badger section for 13.1 and then used the section with Lee or Pea that follows immediately. Several took the badger section, Tanya's 'one for the road' section, the talk about the fair and her departure and used them somewhat randomly for both 13.1 and 13.2. This often meant that neither answers were particularly well-developed as they had restricted the material they gave themselves to work with. More successful ones used these sections for their answer to 13.1 and then moved to Act Two to discuss Tanya's relationship with Lee or Pea for 13.2.

Jerusalem 14.1

Very few students tackled this question and all but a handful revealed only partial understanding of both the question's demands and of the technical needs of the opening of the play. Some students wrote at great length about the equipment required and its technical capabilities but failed to offer any real detail as to the actual effects that could be created, whilst others offered some ideas about

mood and atmosphere but provided little understanding of how this could be achieved. The prologue was rarely considered in any detail or indeed how it might be used to contrast with the start of the Act. Most answers did however recognise the need to support the location of the play as expressed in Butterworth's stage directions.

Jerusalem 14.2

Unfortunately this part of the question was tackled with less proficiency than the first part. Realism was rarely mentioned; indeed some of the effects that students described clearly went against this notion. In one or two cases there was some sophisticated understanding of how lighting and sound might be used to convey time of day and to how sounds, as a quiet underscore might make reference to the nearby town. In this part as in Part One, students sometimes didn't recognise the requirement to write about both lighting and sound design.

Section B Live Theatre Production

There were some very good answers seen where it was clear that the students had explored the different roles in some depth prior to the examination and had a very secure understanding of both performance skills and appropriate technical and theatrical terminology.

General points regarding this section (please also refer to points made at start of report).

Appropriateness of production

It is vital that students choose an appropriate production for the question and are able to discuss the moments being considered in some detail, with precise reference to the focus of the question. Additionally when selecting the production they are going to write about they must consider both parts of the question. In some cases, it was apparent that the production whilst eminently suitable for Part One or Part Two either did not provide the student with sufficient opportunities to write about the other part or they had failed to prepare enough detail in relation to, usually, the design elements. For example; Frantic Assembly's *Things I Know To Be True* proved very popular but sadly many students whilst, to a greater or lesser extent, able to describe and analyse the naturalistic performances found it very difficult to answer either question 15.1 or 17.1 owing to a lack of detailed recognition of how the designs were accomplished.

Context of moments

Although the question requires the student to write about only two moments for each part, it is vital that the context is provided for these moments; to simply state 'in my first moment x is walking towards y...' without any explanation as to why or indeed at what point in the production this is happening is not helpful to the examiner. It is not helpful to refer to the 'Night Club Scene' if the examiner does not know who was in the nightclub and to what end. Alternatively, some students spent so much time describing what was happening in the selected scene that they left themselves no time to explore the precise focus of the question.

Use of sketches

As a reminder, sketches are required for answers to questions on set and costume design (and may be useful for lighting) – these sketches should support the student's answer and not be a replacement for it and they should be annotated in such a way as to help support their answer and in particular the focus of the question.

Design and performer terminology

Students should ensure that they have a sufficient grasp of the terminology relating to both acting

and design in order for them to be able to communicate their understanding of the production seen. All too often examiners reported seeing examples of misunderstanding particularly related to aspects of design. The mark scheme for this exam (and the sample material available) contains details of the elements of design and performance that a student might be expected to make reference to – whilst this should not be considered a checklist, it serves as a useful indication as to how a student might prepare for any type of question.

Focus

As is common to all questions on this paper, students are expected to write to the specific focus of the question. In cases where there was little reference to the focus of the question, responses were generalised and lacking in precision. The focus of the question is there to support the student, i.e. in the time allotted it should enable a well-prepared student to write about only one aspect of the production.

Assumptions/Assertions about production

Students should not assume prior knowledge on the part of the examiner in relation to the production as a whole or the moments within it. The examiner may have seen the chosen play but this does not mean that there is no requirement to address each of the elements contained within the mark scheme.

Similarly some students have a tendency to make assertions when discussing the effect of a particular physical or vocal quality or lighting or sound effect. The best responses supported their description of the above with precise analysis of effect.

Finally, some students failed to realise that they needed to answer both sections of the question on one production.

15.1

The majority of answers chose an appropriate production and commented in some detail on lighting design. Some students revealed a good command of technical knowledge and appropriate use of terminology. Some answers did not give sufficient context for the moments chosen and therefore the intended effects were not fully realised. Some answers chose productions with complex lighting plots that they found difficult to explore and evaluate in the time allowed. A frequent example of this was *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* where all but the best responses failed to describe in any satisfactory detail the way in which either the grid was created and used or how the many projections were used to create effects. A few answers selected a moment with only one quite simple lighting effect, generally in a naturalistic production, which restricted the opportunities to explore and evaluate the success of the design.

In many cases lighting was referred to with insufficient awareness of technical terms such as ‘gels’ or ‘wash’ and, when they were used, it was often inaccurately. Spotlights were referred to as lighting the whole stage and a wash was described as isolating a single character. Sometimes comments about lighting were not linked to a specific moment and references were very generalised.

15.2

Several students selected useful moments with actors working together although many answers often just referred to moments when two actors were on stage together without offering any real sense of how they worked together. Similarly, some weaker responses were confined to an exploration of two different actors but at separate moments. There was some detailed reflection on skills, but also some generalisation and several students tended to unsupported assertion of

effects. Better answers had some focus on mood and explored how change had been effected. Weaker answers examined moments where the same or similar moods had been created.

There were some very good responses that considered the ways in which the performers worked together in relation to their positioning, their entrances and exits and their use of space and/or levels. Reference to mood was sometimes less well executed although most students were able to say something about either changes in tension or increased or decreased amusement.

16.1

The majority of students selected appropriate productions and there was some specific focus on the demands of the question. Students need to be aware that design answers require a labelled sketch and that the sketch should offer more detail than is being discussed in the body of the answer. Better answers showed a good understanding of how costumes linked to the style of the production and created meaning for the audience. The best answers gave detail and context for the chosen moments and explored how costume was used in production. These answers made reference to design fundamentals such as colour, cut, fabric and fit and pleasingly there was some understanding of period features. Sometimes students described the character and made reference to the above fundamentals but without providing any precise details of the actual clothes worn. The best answers considered what the factors were that made the costume appropriate to the style by considering elements such as change in a character's circumstance or their function in relation to other characters.

16.2

There was some misunderstanding of the demands of the question, with several students making reference to the actor demonstrating different aspects of the same character. These answers were often based on an inappropriate choice of production. Good answers gave some context for the characters created, showing an understanding of the actor's intentions. These answers often made reference to the characters' functions within the production. Good answers offered some detail of the actor's skills and secure evaluation of their success. These answers often made reference to the delivery of specific lines.

Some of the better responses were able to show, through precise analysis of vocal and physical skills, exactly how a performer created more than one character whilst weaker ones did little more than present a comparison of two characters rather than a sense of how they were performed. In many cases there was an imprecision or imbalance in these answers with one character receiving far more attention than the other – whilst there is no requirement to split the time equally, the question does imply that there should be a reasonable attention given to each role.

17.1

This was the most popular of questions in this section of the paper. The majority of answers were based on a suitable production and showed some understanding of the designer's role. Not all answers were accompanied by a sketch, which is a requirement, and in the case of set design, absolutely essential in terms of the way the student was able to make clear to the examiner what the imaginative or interesting aspects were. Weaker answers offered limited detail of design fundamentals, for example, scale, colour, texture, entrances etc. Some less well developed responses showed insecurity with technical terms such as gauze and cyclorama, and the use of these features was unclear. As with Question 15, some students selected productions with very complex settings that they found difficult to describe and evaluate in the time given. Conversely, some choices were of quite minimalistic settings, which offered few clear opportunities to evaluate the designer's skills. Most answers selected appropriate moments, but weaker answers did not put

these into context, limiting the evaluation of the effectiveness of the set. Some answers made negligible reference to the action of the production.

In a number of cases, students failed to link the set to specific moments and the 'imaginative or interesting setting for the action' was often skirted over. Claims for the effectiveness of the set often relied heavily on assertion and many weaker responses were very brief.

17.2

The majority of answers selected appropriate moments and focused on one performer. Weaker answers gave too little detail of the actor's skills and tended towards assertion. At times there was an over reliance on the explanation of the moment which although resulting in an emotional response gave too little detail as to how it was created. Better answers put the chosen moments into context and commented usefully on the actor's intentions, in relation to the characters' situation. Weaker responses chose very brief moments from the selected production, giving very little opportunity for exploration and evaluation. There were a few excellent answers that gave very clear and specific detail of the creation of meaning and emotion for the audience.

This was done more successfully than some of the other performance questions, audience response seems to be something that students can deal with better than the focus in some of the questions. Although at times the evaluation was a little simplistic, usually along the lines of 'it was successful because it made me cry/laugh/fearful' there was usually a sense that it was focused.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.