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A-LEVEL

# DRAMA AND THEATRE

7262/W Drama and theatre  
Report on the Examination

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## General Comments

- Teachers are to be commended for their role in guiding this 2023 cohort, who were prevented by the pandemic from sitting external GCSE examinations, to attain the A level standard.
- The most significant factor in any student's success in the written paper lies in whether or not they read the chosen question carefully, note its precise demands and focus on those demands consistently throughout their answers. Examiners commented on the fact that some, apparently very able and fluent, students did not take the opportunity to achieve very high marks by simply ignoring the focus of their chosen questions.
- Questions on the set texts are not interchangeable. If the question asks about 'audience response' to a character, if this is not foregrounded in the answer, the student will under-achieve. If the question asks for an interpretation of character, students' statements about audience response are unlikely to attract much credit.
- There were very few rubric infringements. No students appeared to have studied the prohibited combination of texts for Sections A and B, or written about the wrong extract for Section B, although some students did not maintain focus on the prescribed parts of the printed extract. Section C was also addressed as expected.
- Examiners noted a marked improvement in the quality of sketches and diagrams offered in support of questions in all three sections.
- Examiners noted instances where every student in the cohort offered exactly the same design ideas in Question 3 of the Section B texts, supported with identical sketches. Whatever the size of the cohort, teachers should be encouraging their students to present their own ideas in the examination, rather than replicating a 'corporate' vision of design for the play.
- Students should be reminded that, in Section B, they must be prepared to answer on any aspect of design and that they will be expected to support answers about set, costumes, make-up, props and/or accessories with clearly labelled – and neatly drawn - sketches.
- Unfortunately, the usual reminder to discuss 'Social, Cultural and Historical contexts' in Section A was missed off. To mitigate any adverse impact created by this omission, an alternative marking approach was used for any students who did not make any reference to the social, cultural and/or historical context of the text to allow students access to the full range of marks. Student responses that did include reference to social, cultural and/or historical context were marked as normal. Student responses were closely monitored throughout and there was no evidence to suggest a difference in student responses this year in comparison to previous years.
- The majority of students were able to make some pertinent references to context in their answers in Section A. In their Section B answers, examiners reported that many students included a 'freestanding' generic 'SCH paragraph' at the beginning of each of the three questions – which was not necessary or an efficient use of time – repeated information attracts no credit whatever its content.
- As always, examiners reported a wide variety of achievement in reference to quotation. Students should be reminded that the most effective method of quotation is to use complete phrases or lines. Use of line numbers or page numbers to identify text is rarely helpful, as editions differ. Nor do individual words and phrases from a speech, joined together by ellipses, help the examiner to 'hear' the text in action.
- Reference to Total Dramatic Effectiveness for Section C was also inconsistent. Many students omitted to refer to this at all – this affected their achievement as it is a key plank of each of the questions. A lot of students wrote "which contributed to the total dramatic effectiveness of the production" at the end of each section of description or explanation without elaborating further and explaining how.

- Students continue to ‘open’ and ‘close’ their proxemics – which is incorrect. Others wrote about adopting an ‘open’ or ‘closed’ gate – meaning ‘gait’- frequently linking ‘gait’ to a character who is standing still or even sitting. As ‘gait’ refers to a style of walking, these suggestions attracted no credit. It is also impossible to walk with a ‘sympathetic’ or ‘loving’ gait, though students frequently did suggest these qualities might be communicated through gait.
- Every year examiners report seeing scripts that evidence students’ limited performance ‘vocabulary’. Students should be encouraged to watch more live or streamed theatre – or even film and TV drama - to familiarise themselves with what actors actually **do** with their bodies, their faces, their voices, to communicate a range of emotions without resorting to tropes such as scrunching, frowning, clenching, squinting or ‘planting’ themselves.
- One trend noted by examiners this year was for students to offer the names of contemporary actors when they were considering the casting of characters; this is unhelpful as the examiner might not recognise the actor specified and the reference would not be credited. Students should identify the physical and/or vocal qualities that they would look for in casting, rather than nominating a real actor.
- Perhaps due to the pandemic, it appeared that some students may have seen fewer live performances, which reduced the breadth of their answers in Section C.
- Students should be reminded that Question C questions are intended to elicit answers that focused precisely on the demand of the chosen question; general descriptions of the selected production – however enthusiastically framed – attracts little credit.
- Some answers in Section C reflected the filmic qualities of streamed productions. It is to be hoped that the 2023 cohort have more opportunities to experience live theatre and can reflect on the impact of live performances.

## Section A

Antigone  
Q 01

- This was a popular question, mostly answered from the perspective of a director.
- A few students chose to write from a designer’s perspective and most of these opted to answer as costume designers.
- Whatever perspective was selected, only those students who noted that the question focus was to ‘achieve your intended effects’ offered ‘reasonable’ to ‘very good’ responses. Many students omitted to establish the effects that they were striving to achieve which meant that the directorial or design ideas that they described had no clear purpose.
- Where ‘intended effects’ were identified, at the outset, directorial intentions frequently included revealing Creon’s tyrannical nature, his hubris, his unreasonableness, his cruelty.
- Designers often chose ‘costume design’ and focused on conveying the relative statuses of the characters in confrontation with Creon.
- Costume designers offered some reasonable work on the use of colour and materials, better students included style, cut, fit, condition and they revealed good knowledge of the types of garments worn by the Greeks in ancient times.
- Examiners noted fewer students referring to ‘togas’ in this series.
- Creon’s costume was considered by most students. Costumes for Creon frequently included a military twist, occasionally featuring ceremonial regalia with lines of medals adorning a jacket. Those who stayed with traditional Greek costume suggested appropriate embellishments to represent Creon’s royalty through the use of a gold-coloured coronet or the use of ornate brooches holding his cloak.

- Designs for Tiresias varied according to interpretation, with the majority going for aspects of his mythical character, his simple lifestyle and his blindness, which necessitated his use of a staff.
- Antigone’s situation was generally well considered, with clear detail of her practical garments being stained and ripped during the burial and her subsequent arrest.
- Students who chose the directorial option showed generally good or secure awareness of intended effects, which included pity for Antigone, disgust at Creon and respect for Tiresias. The Sentry was occasionally played purely for comic effect, not always successfully, giving him inappropriate gestures and “winks to the audience”, for example.
- Most students made appropriate selections from the text, and examiners saw some well-supported responses. In weaker answers, students chose only brief moments to base their answers on, limiting the effectiveness of their answers.
- A few students wrote about Haemon’s confrontation with Creon as part of their answer to Question 01, but as Haemon was not one of the character options for this question, the work that referred to Haemon attracted no credit.

#### Q 02

- This was a popular question and attracted some very successful answers.
- There was evidence of good social, cultural and historical knowledge which was, for the most part, focused on the question.
- Most students showed a very secure understanding of the role of Haemon, in these answers, there was a focus on Haemon’s diplomatic nature and his loyal qualities which are revealed in relation to both Creon and to Antigone. Some wrote about Haemon’s bravery in confronting his father and others described this as determination or resolve.
- Some students wrote more about Haemon’s feelings and/or attitudes, rather than his character and they wrote about his frustration with Creon or his disappointment with him or about his love for Antigone, but these are not traits of character and could not be credited as such.
- The best answers always used the text to support ideas and examiners reported seeing some very well supported work.

#### Much Ado about Nothing

#### Q 03

- The most successful responses to this question, irrespective of whether adopting the viewpoint of performer or director, adhered closely to the dual focus of the question, i.e. to create comedy and to ensure that this comedy was derived through the interactions between Benedick and Beatrice.
- Unfortunately, in numerous instances, the notion of interaction was only mentioned at the beginning of the answer or as a passing assertion, at the end.
- There were also some instances reported where Beatrice wasn’t mentioned and the direction was entirely related to Benedick, and, sometimes, students chose a section when he was alone on stage.
- Creation of comedy was achieved on a sliding scale from ‘very successful’ - clever, thoughtful and entirely appropriate, to ‘completely unsuccessful’ - lacking in comic invention with ideas that were unconvincing, either in terms of character, action or text or, in some cases, all three.
- Better responses offered examples of Benedick’s comic interaction with Beatrice in two or more sections and revealed understanding of both Benedick’s character and his changing feelings towards Beatrice.

- Some answers ignored the witty interplay of dialogue between Benedick and Beatrice in favour of a slapstick approach to the role. In these responses, students offered a series of set pieces or comic ‘gags’ with negligible reference to text.
- Many of these answers succeeded in presenting Benedick as a complete buffoon, unworthy of Beatrice’s affection; others implied that he was a misogynist and this interpretation tended to reduce the comic potential of some of their interactions.

Q 04

- Although the less popular choice of the two questions on this text, examiners reported seeing a range of achievement with some creative ideas for revealing contrasting moods.
- There was a spread of design options covered with the most popular combinations being set/lighting and sound/lighting.
- Examiners reported that the most popular choice of sections were the opening of the play and the scene of Hero’s and Claudio’s ‘wedding, with various moods considered.
- Few answers took the opportunity to explore the darker moments in the play - most however did successfully address the requirement for contrast.
- Less successful responses failed to provide sufficient design detail (or in several cases) any sketches, or ones that failed to provide sufficient information to be of any value.
- The majority of the responses seen opted for a contemporary setting, often clearly influenced by productions that are available on streaming platforms.
- One common error was inadequate reference to the text in the sections being considered, however there were some notable exceptions to this where students choosing lighting and sound, provided good details for underscoring the text with mood-creating sounds or subtle shifts in lighting colour/angle that would enhance the audience experience.

A Servant to Two Masters

Q 05

- This was a very popular question, and the majority of answers showed a secure awareness of the role and of Clarice’s ‘commedia’ antecedents.
- A few students included very lengthy introductions explaining Goldoni’s intentions and the historical background to the text, rather than focusing quickly on the question demands. The extensive exploration of SCH showed knowledge but often did not support the question focus and performance points effectively.
- Textual references were generally well selected and showed the changing attitudes of Clarice quite clearly. There was some excellent detail of her over-dramatic nature, swooning and pleading when first hearing of Federigo’s amazing ‘return from the dead’, and her childish tantrums.
- A few students concentrated on business which was not directly focussed to the question, for example her pre-occupation with her own appearance, her spoilt ‘brattish’ (sic) personality and her spoilt princess attitude.
- Clarice’s changing attitude to Beatrice/Federigo was generally well documented and realised using some inventive practical ideas.
- A few students commented usefully on her later impatience with Beatrice/Federigo when it seems the situation is growing more difficult, and Clarice is on the brink of losing Silvio’s trust. Some excellent work showed these shifts in attitude with clear detail and deft performance ideas.

Q 06

- Only a few students responded to this question.
- There were some useful suggestions which considered period features, such as balconies, and chandeliers, and there was good use of colour, referencing the pinks, greens and golds popular in the period.
- There was consideration of the action, with sufficient space to accommodate the pace of some scenes and there were features such as stairs and balconies to accommodate lazzi and slapstick comedy.
- A few students made reference to specific moments of the text, for example the use of doors in the inn, when Truffaldino is serving his masters and wooing Smeraldina, with a farcical result.
- Some answers showed a good understanding of the designer's role, and these answers were generally successful.

Hedda Gabler

Q 07

- This was a very popular question although a minority of students appeared not to understand its requirements.
- Some students responded to a question that they would have preferred to have seen on the paper, focused on Hedda's manipulative qualities. A significant number of students performed quite badly, as the question focus was on directing or performing Tesman and not on directing or performing Hedda.
- Other students realised that Tesman was the focus, but they interpreted it as requiring an exploration of things that Tesman did not understand about Hedda. In these answers there were comments about Tesman not understanding why Hedda would not treat his aunt affectionately, or why she did not wish to look at his 'old slippers'.
- Some students thought that Tesman did not understand that Hedda was jealous of his past relationship with Thea.
- Others thought that he could not understand why, in Act One, Hedda did not want Tesman to discuss her pregnancy with Aunt Juliana – revealing a misunderstanding of Tesman's complete lack of awareness of the reasons for Hedda 'filling out' during the six-month honeymoon.
- Better answers revealed a good understanding of Tesman's inability to read Hedda but particularly as regards her true feelings for him – the question. These students selected useful sections for revealing Tesman's blindness to Hedda's almost palpable loathing of him. Apt sections included Thea's first visit to the Tesman home in Act One and Tesman's gullible response to Hedda's avowal that she has burned Loevborg's manuscript, for his sake, in Act 4.
- As has been reported in many Examiner's reports over the years, students do themselves no service if they rush into their answers without fully considering the specific requirements of the question that they have selected.

Q 08

- This question attracted too few responses to make any purposeful report on how it was tackled.

## Caucasian Chalk Circle

## Q 09

- This question attracted relatively few responses and invariably the question was answered from the perspective of a director rather than from the perspective of a designer.
- Not very many students appeared to be prepared to consider Brecht's intention to appeal to the audience's intellect rather than to their emotions.
- There was significant evidence to suggest that some students' grasp of Brechtian theory was not entirely secure.
- A significant number of students appear not to understand the meaning of the term 'Verfremdungseffekte', although this term was frequently bandied about, with a German or an English spelling - or with a spelling of the student's own devising.
- Some students peppered their answers with references to Spass, to acting 'in a spirit of criticism' and to 'demonstration' rather than 'embodiment' of a character, but knowing these terms did not always translate into the adoption of a directorial method that supported this more 'detached' approach to the presentation of the story.
- Some students appeared to be answering last year's question and wrote about the contrasting presentation of the rich and the poor characters. Occasionally, students who did this were able to forge a competent argument for achieving Brecht's intentions.
- Some quite successful work was seen where students focused on establishing a contrast between how they would direct the actor playing Grusha (sympathetic) and how they would direct the Governor's Wife, (emphatically in a spirit of criticism) but students needed to shape their material to the precise demands of the question, and this was not always the case.
- Those very few students who attempted to discuss staging as a designer frequently betrayed a misunderstanding of Brecht's general approach to theatre design.
- As reported in previous reports, these students based their answers on the mistaken belief that Brecht was a champion of minimalism.
- Some students repeated the misleading notion that Brecht chose not to use props in his productions, when both photographic and written records reveal Brecht's meticulous concern for sourcing authentic props that reflected the period and setting of his plays.
- Some students also repeated the misguided belief that characters in Brecht's productions wore 'theatre blacks' to perform in.
- Some students repeated the mistaken notion that Brecht used 'placards' to identify the characters in his plays.
- Any or all of these approaches to design were inappropriate and unlikely to achieve or to challenge Brecht's stated intentions to encourage intellectual rather than emotional engagement with Grusha's story.

## Q 10

- Some strong answers were seen from well-prepared students with a good understanding of Brecht's purpose in his creation of the role of Simon.
- Weaker answers were almost entirely focused on Simon's initial encounter with Grusha.
- Some students presented Simon as a 'goofy' figure of fun, shyly courting Grusha, tripping over his 'spear' and prodding Grusha's 'goose' in their first encounter, fumbling with his mother's necklace and/or falling over his feet, in their second encounter.
- In most of the answers seen on Simon, these were the only two sections considered; so that Simon's true character as a thoroughly decent member of the proletariat – as revealed in the Chalk Circle scene - was not considered.



- Occasionally, Simon was presented as something of a ‘creepy’ voyeur, lecherously observing Grusha while she is bathing; a number of students had him using his ‘spear’ to lift Grusha’s skirt while he is ‘teasing’ her about what he has witnessed down by the willows.
- Neither of these interpretations was adequately justified in terms of Brecht’s dramatic purpose.
- Many students did not notice that the question focus is ‘to convey your interpretation of (Simon’s) character to the audience’ this led many students to write about Simon’s feelings and not about his character – his love for Grusha, for example, is not a character trait, nor is his ‘heart-break’, as many students described it, when he believes that Michael is Grusha’s child, a trait of character, but an emotion.
- There were some very lively and often vivid sections of description of Simon’s performance, but if the sole purpose of the description was to create comedy for the audience, as was the case in many answers seen, the question focus was missed.
- Other students answered the question ‘How would you want the audience to respond to the role of Simon?’ – this was not the question – in such responses, examiners noted a complete lack of understanding of Brecht’s intentions as their stated ‘preferred responses’ were almost always emotional ones as Simon was presented as ‘endearing’ or ‘heart-warming’.
- Not all students were equally equipped to discuss their application of Brechtian performance techniques such as acting in the spirit of criticism, adopting the ‘not/but, using gestus (frequently confused with gesture) and attempting to create Spass.
- Some students had been unduly influenced by garbled accounts of a Brechtian style from a range of unregulated sources.
- Weaker answers became side-tracked into a narrative of the plotline.
- Some students appeared to base their interpretation of Simon on a ‘school production’ of the play so that each student in the cohort described the same moments from Simon’s performance, in exactly the same way, using exactly the same textual references to support their answers.
- Many answers showed limited understanding of context, beyond Brecht’s self-imposed exile from Germany.

#### Accidental Death of an Anarchist

##### Q 11

- There was a wide range of responses to this question; at the more successful end of the spectrum students focused closely on the wording of the question.
- The question required students to identify their intended effects; if students failed to identify any intended effects, it was difficult for them to gain marks as this was the Question focus.
- The question required students to write about **two** separate sections of the play. If students wrote about more than two sections - as some did - the more successful two sections would attract credit while any additional sections would not.
- The question also required that students write about the Maniac’s interaction with one or more of the police officers. Unfortunately, in some instances this element of the question was entirely ignored.
- Having revisited the requirements of the question it will be apparent that Examiners often reported that many students began their answers with a lengthy pre-ambule about the background to the play and its historical significance and then launched straight into, ‘my first moment is....’, leaving examiners wondering what the actions that were being described (frequently with limited use of text) were designed to achieve.
- Examiners also reported seeing numerous responses where students focused upon the Maniac’s telephone conversation at the start of the play. Some Students also wrote about

the Maniac's interaction with the audience, which occurs at various points in the play, but which is also outside the scope of the question.

- There was a reasonably consistent understanding of the Maniac's role within the play and examiners reported seeing some excellent responses to the sections of the play where it is apparent that he is manipulating the officers in order to expose their incompetence.
- Although there were often some clear details regarding the application of physical performance techniques to each situation, only some responses offered detailed explanations of the Maniac's vocal qualities. At best, these were highly inventive and detailed explorations of the delivery of specific lines of text rather than the generic and largely aimless statements such as, 'I would raise my pitch and tone'. Better students always provided the reader with exact details that demonstrated precisely how the Maniac adopted his various personas.
- The most successful responses offered clear and precise practical strategies that demonstrated an understanding of Fo's purpose and offered some well-honed ideas regarding some of the more bizarre characteristics of the Maniac as he interacts with the Police.

#### Q 12

- There were a few responses to this question.
- It is particularly apparent, with answers to design questions, where students have obviously thought about, and practised their ideas prior to the exam. Where this is the case, responses contained clear sketches that were usefully annotated, and these supported the material being discussed in the body of the essay.
- Unfortunately, all too often, it appeared as though the student had never considered how they might draw a costume and some failed to provide any sketch at all.
- The question focus, to enhance the farcical nature of the play, was reasonably well maintained in explanations of the Maniac's various disguises. Examiners reported seeing some creative explanations of wigs, hats and jackets as well as how the Maniac applied them, sometimes in full view of other characters, helping to support the notion of farce.
- Costumes ideas for Felletti were generally quite clear, most students opting to place her in a two-piece skirt suit, however explanations of this were often quite generic and there was little sense as to how a suit, in itself, contributed to farce. There were of course exceptions to this, for example, where the pencil skirt was so tight as to effectively restrict Felletti's movement resulting in her having to totter around the stage following other characters at a pace that was genuinely comic.
- Similarly, there was often a lack of detail in explanations of Bertozzo's costume, most students opting to clothe him a generic suit. Where students had discussed, for example, the shiny worn patches of his suit, the frayed edges at the cuff or the turn-up that was hanging down, as examples of how his costume helped to reveal his unsuitability for the role, these small details really helped to lift the response.
- Accessories was sometimes left as an afterthought but there were some useful details which when described in relation to a moment of action helped to root the students' ideas in the text. So, the false eye and the bomb for the Maniac, Felletti's notebook and Dictaphone, and Bertozzo's police accoutrements all received some attention.
- Few students considered make-up in any detail.

#### Jerusalem

#### Q 13

- There were some interesting responses to this question and students chose to answer from the perspective of a director in the majority of answers.

- As always, the more successful answers started with establishing the specific effects that the student was aiming for in their interpretation of the chosen characters.
- Where this was attempted, most wrote about Ms Fawcett as a representation of authority in an otherwise dissolute ‘world’ of Johnny’s making. With Tanya and Lee representing the disaffected youth drawn to Johnny’s ‘alternative’ lifestyle.
- Dawn and Troy were the most frequently selected pair of characters.
- Students wanted Dawn to be perceived by the audience as a ‘grown-up’ as opposed to the ‘kids’ and those with ‘arrested development’ such as Ginger, who were ‘hangers-on’ around Johnny. Some students thought Dawn should be quite patronising towards Johnny and, if costume design was attempted or referred to from a director’s perspective, students tended to dress Dawn smartly yet conservatively – a complete opposite to the ‘bohemian’ lifestyle represented by Johnny’s squalid caravan and attire.
- Troy was presented as a stereotypical macho ‘bloke’. Students suggested tattoos and piercings, leather jackets and sometimes jeans and sometimes leather trousers; sometimes he was given a bandana to wear; one student suggested motorbike gear complete with helmet.
- Less confident students were able to describe the selected characters and provide some directorial detail from the selected sections, but either ignored the requirement to state their intended effects or were unable to think of any.
- Where students did suggest an intended effect, for example, some stated that they wanted to create the effect that Johnny’s ‘friends’ were all from a similar socio-economic background, they chose Tanya and Lee and dressed them in similar distressed jeans and Tee-shirts with abstract logos, wearing matching trainers and with piercings.
- Often students used only limited text to support their ideas which inhibited the quality of the answer.
- Students who opted to answer the question from the perspective of a designer offered some ideas for costume with some focus on period, setting and other design fundamentals. Sketches were included and were quite useful, enhancing the written answer.

## Q 14

- This was the more popular question on the play and a number of examples were seen, with varying levels of achievement.
- Davey is on stage for half of the play, so it was disappointing to see a fairly narrow range from his time on stage discussed by students.
- Better answers showed an understanding of Davey’s character and his role both in relation to Johnny and in relation to other ‘hangers-on’ who frequent Johnny’s ‘hideaway’ in search of recreational ‘highs’ and to be with ‘like-minded’ ‘friends’.
- Most students selected apt moments from the text that were then explored practically.
- As is so often the case, answers that actually targeted the precise focus of the question were in the minority. Question 14 asked students for performance ideas for Davey that would achieve the students’ ‘preferred audience responses’. It was therefore crucial that students identify their preferred responses before launching into practical suggestions calculated to achieve them.
- Some of the intended audience responses to Davey included amusement at his ‘antics’ during his initial appearance, his determination to remain in Flintock and his tomfoolery on the roof of the caravan in Act Two, pity for his limited, but self-inflicted lifestyle and work at the abattoir, and disgust at his cavalier attitude to his unpleasant occupation.
- Weaker answers focused on a very narrow range of text for the sections chosen, limiting the scope of any performance ideas offered.

## Yerma

## Q 15.1

- Most of the students responding to this question were successful in being able to identify that Yerma and Maria do have different views on 'motherhood'. However, it was their application of directorial strategies that created a range of responses.
- In the most successful answers, students identified that Yerma's view is formed by her years of longing for a child which, when linked to appropriate social and cultural references, made her desperation seem entirely plausible. Whilst Maria's view when expressed as anxiety based on her youth and fear of the unknown, allowed for a nuanced response.
- Some students however took such an extreme approach that appeared to be in opposition with the poetic qualities of Lorca's language. Having Yerma forcefully grabbing Maria, or to have Maria wailing in distress is unlikely to reveal either an understanding of the extract or the style. Demonstrating an awareness of SCH was best when embedded into the answer and there were some apt details given regarding the expectation that wives will become mothers.
- Some responses were a little unbalanced with the majority of the answer focussing on Yerma's views and with Maria appearing as little more than a sounding board for her views. When students considered the unspoken reactions of one character to another this helped to demonstrate a theatrical awareness that lifted the response.

## Q 15.2

- Successful responses to this question needed to demonstrate an understanding of the phrase 'turbulent emotions' and significantly, to consider a range of moments from across a comparatively brief section.
- Where students only focussed on one or two moments, generally from the early part of the prescribed section of the extract, they were rarely able to express the full range of what Yerma is feeling.
- A significant number of students did not recognise the range of factors that created Yerma's turbulent emotions and therefore they floundered somewhat when attempting to reveal them
- Most students recognised Yerma's complicated feelings about being in Victor's presence but, all too often, the performance strategies offered revealed a lack of understanding of the mores of the time, with students selecting very 21st century approaches to signals of attraction.
- Yerma's final moment at the end of the extract attracted a range of ideas, at best conveying a sense of her loss mingled with desire. As is generally the case, the more variety of expressions a student can use to convey vocal and physical techniques, the more vivid and successful the response.

## Q 15.3

- This question was handled with a degree of assurance when students had clearly been well prepared to consider the design elements for this play in relation to its style.
- However, many answers failed to focus sufficiently on 'appropriate atmosphere' instead offering rather generic ideas that, although appropriate for the play as a whole, failed to address the extract.

- Unfortunately, some students did not recognise the term ‘technical design’ and only offered details about the set, wherever possible examiners credited material if it had some link to technical.
- The most successful responses discussed lighting and/or sound and in the best cases these were considered together. It should be apparent that these two design elements are the most likely to create atmosphere.
- Those students who chose moments carefully from the extract were able to provide details relating to a range of atmospheres including: optimistic, excited, mournful, tense.
- Examiners reported reading some highly evocative descriptions of the way that appropriate sounds or music were used to underscore the action, coupled with subtle shifts in the lighting states. Conversely placing Yerma in a blue spotlight (to reveal her desperation) and Maria in a pink one (to demonstrate her youth) is unlikely to achieve the desired effects.
- As with directing/performance questions, the more secure a student’s use of design vocabulary, the greater their chances of explaining their choices, however, simply asserting that an LED light at 40% will achieve this or that effect, without justification, adds little to the response.

### The Glass Menagerie

#### Q 16.1

- The best answers to this question identified the nature of the mother-daughter relationship from the outset and then set about explaining precisely how this would be conveyed to the audience using directorial strategies. Some students did not outline their understanding of the relationship, and this frequently resulted in very generalised directorial ideas.
- Some students spent a disproportionate amount of time on the first twenty lines of the extract, thereby omitting Amanda’s lengthy but revealing description of the lot of unmarried women. This meant that Amanda’s genuine concern for Laura’s future was sometimes glossed over.
- Others offered casting ideas for Amanda and Laura which was not a requirement of the question and rarely offered an insight into their relationship. Students need to be aware that content that is not made relevant to the focus of the question does not attract credit.
- There were some answers which offered some quite subtle directorial details that revealed an understanding of the complex mother-daughter relationship but It was necessary for students to explore what the characters say to one another, as well as how they react to each other’s words, to really bring the extract to life.
- There wasn’t a great deal of purposeful SCH used in answers to this question although some references were made to the ‘American Dream’ and there were some comments made about the poor living conditions of the Wingfields.

#### Q 16.2

- There were a variety of responses to this question, including some very strong answers.
- A few students had not noted the prescribed lines for the question and started their answers earlier in the extract, often repeating points that they had made in their answer to Q 1.
- Some students repeated their casting ideas for Laura, sometimes with the addition of costume details, as an irrelevant preamble to Question 2, wasting more valuable time.
- However, Laura’s infatuation with her girlhood ‘crush’, Jim, was often dealt with very sensitively.

- In strong answers, students described Laura's sudden animation as she hurries to fetch the yearbook and they paid attention to her brightening eyes and to her facial expressions as she looked through the yearbook, smiling in delight at the pictures of the promising young man.
- Good answers referenced the stage directions and offered performance ideas for Laura's invigorated appearance, her improved posture and sudden rush of excitement.
- Some students lost the performance focus of the question and offered more literary analysis of Laura's state of mind.
- SCH was fairly limited.

Q 16.3

- There were some good design ideas and most students appeared well-prepared to discuss the transition from the tete-a-tete between mother and daughter ending Scene Two on a 'fade out' with music to the introduction of Tom's direct address to the audience from the fire-escape landing. Not all students followed the stage directions which often resulted in some original and sensitive ideas.
- Good answers focused on justifying their choices and they kept audience experience at the forefront of their ideas. Most incorporated both sound and lighting into their ideas and there were some interesting suggestions for the use of the screens.
- Occasionally, students were a little heavy handed with their technical ideas suggesting a little more thought might have gone into the effects they wanted to create through the transition.

Metamorphosis

Q 17.1

- This play has proved to be very popular, but not all students have the theatrical experience to be able to bring the text to life through their suggestions.
- The best responses answered the question in its own terms and focused on the attitudes towards Gregor of each family member in turn, selecting appropriate moments and providing examples as to what the actors were doing on stage to reveal these attitudes.
- However, very few students moved beyond exploring the physical aspects of the character, there was little consideration as to how voice could be used to indicate attitude.
- Perversely, given comments made above, a number of students mistook 'attitude' for 'character' and offered little character sketches for Mr Samsa, Mrs Samsa and Greta, paying no heed to the focus of the question.
- Mr Samsa was occasionally omitted in students' response.
- There was understandably a heavy reliance on using Berkoff's style or creating a piece of Total Theatre, which was commendable when the focus of the question was at the forefront of the answer but quite often the focus was forgotten as students trotted out a list of Berkovian features in a 'standalone' fashion.
- Many answers only focused on the attitude of one or two family members or produced an imbalanced answer.
- A few answers mixed up Mr and Mrs Samsa, so had Mr Samsa as caring and sympathetic and Mrs Samsa as dismissive.
- Many answers only dealt with a small part of the section or selected examples of text that were unlikely to convey attitude.

Q 17.2

- Most answers managed some focus on Gregor’s return to ‘normality’ and then his return to his beetle state, but quite a few used very little of the text in what is quite a short section to cover.
- Some answers relied completely on the stage directions so struggled to produce creative, detailed and effective strategies.
- Some other answers became bogged down in the mechanics of Total Theatre, offering detailed description of the set (but not how Gregor used it) with impressive lighting and sound designs which would have been better appearing as part of a response to Q17.3.
- Answers focusing on only one part of the section were also quite common.

#### Q 17.3

- The most common design choices were set and lighting, set and sound or lighting and sound.
- Many students failed to offer any sense of the configuration of the stage space, specifically in relation to where Gregor’s room was situated, which made it very difficult to visualise the action.
- Where other design elements were suggested, such as costume, students struggled to show how intended effects were achieved that were specifically focused on the extract. For example, Mr Samsa was a typical patriarch, Mrs Samsa a doting mother and Greta a talented schoolgirl, all from their costumes.
- Sketches varied greatly in their quality (if included) and it was often difficult to work out the perspective of a sketch, particularly where students had attempted to draw a complex scaffolding structure for Gregor’s room.
- Some answers again relied solely on the stage directions, giving us scratching sounds, three stools or a hard top light and little else.

#### Our Country’s Good

##### Q 18.1

- Some students’ responses to this question were outweighed by factual information about the genesis of the play and its historical context. Students sometimes devoted an inordinate amount of time and space in the retelling of the background to the text in terms of the historical voyage of the First Fleet to Botany Bay.
- Many answers to Q1 (and sometimes to Q2 and Q3) contained references to *The Fatal Shore* and *The Playmaker* as sources of the story, and a feature of this year’s responses was a return to the trend of telling the examiner what happened to the ‘real life’ characters who appear in the play, in dramatic form, but whose really history has been modified for theatrical purposes. Often, these references did nothing to illuminate the focus of the question.
- Mrs Thatcher continues to feature in many students’ answers; her policies relating both to the ‘Arts’ generally and to ‘Prison reform’, specifically, being reproduced in garbled form, in many instances. While some of these references were made relevant to the precise focus of the question, often the delivery of a ‘block’ of vaguely relevant material added little to the student’s achievement.
- The extract comprises the end of Scene 9 and the whole of Scene 10. Some students failed to notice that the extract did not begin until part way through Scene 9 and they devoted much of their answer to Ralph’s ritual with his wife’s picture (some students referred to this as a ‘photo’ throughout). None of this material could be credited.

- The most common reason for students' underachievement in Q1 was their lack of focus on the question which required them to explain and justify their direction of the actors playing Ralph and Ketch to achieve their 'preferred response to each character'. Fewer than a third of the answers to this question focused on audience response.
- Where students did consider 'audience response' it was invariably related to Ketch and not to Ralph.
- Responses to Ketch were almost unanimously positive and sympathetic; a tiny minority of students attempting this question appeared to recognise that what Ketch was describing as having taken place at Shadwell Dock was his complicity in the murder of an innocent sailor. This cowardly action was followed by Ketch's betrayal of his accomplices to the authorities. Yet students, almost unanimously, suggested that audiences might be sympathetic to the character.

## Q 18.2

- Some students showed a good understanding of Wisehammer's character – an interpretation of his character was required by the question. Ironically, students who had ignored the 'audience response' aspect of Q1 made this the focus of their treatment of Wisehammer, with predictable outcomes.
- Good answers recognised Wisehammer's qualities of modesty and intelligence; they noted his sensitivity and his eloquence, they recognised his kindness and affability. Wisehammer was occasionally described as 'an intellectual' which is perhaps a little far-fetched but this was, at least, on the right lines.
- Many students did not focus on offering an interpretation of Wisehammer's character; instead they focused on his growing feelings for Mary and this became their prime focus.
- Wisehammer's compliment of Mary's handwriting 'you have a beautiful hand' was misinterpreted by the majority of students and was seized upon as a sign of Wisehammer's 'flirtatious' character, leading some students to suggest that Wisehammer, at this point, takes Mary's hand in his, and kisses it.
- Overall, although the answers were generally better than the majority of answers to Q1, they were unfocused on the clear demands of the question.
- Some students revealed very limited understanding of Wisehammer's character.

## Q 18.3

- There were some excellent answers to this question. Examiners were very pleased to report how the focus on achieving the transition between the scenes was embraced by all students, even those who had lacked focus in their answers to Q1 and Q2. For many students, this was their best answer on Our Country's Good.
- Many inventive designs were seen for each of Scenes 9 and 10. The majority of students appreciated the shift from night-time to late afternoon required by the transition and they offered excellent technical strategies for achieving the move from the interior of Ralph Clark's personal tent, at night/bedtime, to an exterior setting which takes place in the afternoon.
- In Scene 9, the stage directions refer to 'candlelight' which most students noted and supplied using a variety of lighting techniques. Ralph is preparing to go to bed, so a bed of some sort was regularly provided as was a desk where Ralph keeps the picture of his wife.
- Students suggested an array of possibilities for removing these items and re-set for the next scene utilising scenic devices such as trucks or flown scenery.
- Scene 10 takes place outdoors, where Wisehammer is carrying/piling up bricks and Mary is copying out the text of The Recruiting Officer, so these props were required and almost always provided for in students' descriptions and/or sketches. Stage directions indicate



‘afternoon light’. Many students suggested using the sound of birds/insects to indicate the change in the time of day/night.

Cloud Nine

Q 19

- There were very few answers on this text and, regrettably, they were generally unsuccessful. In all three answers there was insecure understanding of the nature of the comedy in the text and of Churchill’s intentions.

Q 19.1

- These were brief answers which focused almost entirely on comedy through cross gender casting which is not necessarily intrinsically funny.
- There were suggestions for casting, including casting Betty as distinctly larger and more masculine in appearance than Clive. Suggestions for Betty to be bearded and have “hairy legs” tended to be superficial and were not used in performance suggestions.
- Rather better were suggestions for Clive and Betty’s stereotypical performances, with Betty’s feminine gestures and “squeamish” responses to Clive’s relish at the “headsman” being better described.
- The contrasts between this and Clive’s own focus on a trivial blister were not realised. There were some suggestions for a sexualised delivery of “a long ride” which had a little comic potential.
- Joshua and Edward were barely acknowledged, apart from a brief reference to Edward’s overtly feminine stance, high pitched voice and giggles on line 34. Opportunities were missed.

Q 19.2

- Few students completely recognised the stereotypical character which is presented in this section. There was some recognition of the traditional masculine role that Clive is embodying, but only a few performance ideas were given to realise his interactions with Betty.
- There were some answers that recognised the importance of Mr. Bagley’s impending arrival, and Clive’s rather mysterious way of announcing this. One student suggested that Clive was seeking a reaction from Betty by using a teasing tone, and that he was taken aback by her quite lengthy response following “He certainly doesn’t admire me”, suggesting suspicion. This was insightful.
- There was no direction of references to Betty’s mother or Ellen. Opportunities were not taken.

Q 19.3

- There was unfortunately only restricted understanding of the term “colonial” with a few suggestions for the African setting in terms of lighting to indicate heat. There were disappointingly few references to the stage directions, with only a few references to the verandah. Some references were made to the flag-pole but these did not generally develop design detail such as scale and condition.
- The outdoor setting and the close proximity to the veld were only explored in general terms with reference to yellow, dried grass. Sketches lacked precision and detailed labels.
- The answers suggested insecure understanding of both the setting and the designer’s role.

Q 20  
Bronte

- This was not an especially popular text but there were some very secure and detailed answers, showing some genuine enthusiasm for the play.
- In some instances, all of the students in the cohort offered very similar, if not identical, sketches and very similar justifications for their design ideas. It does not help students to discourage their individual design ideas and/or to impose a 'class' response.
- Unfortunately, this question contained a typographical error - the exam paper described the extract as 'end of Act One' when it should have said 'start'. These questions were closely monitored during live marking and there was no evidence that student responses were impacted by the error.

Q 20.1

- Most students offered reasonable answers to this question, with the best answers focusing on the word "engaging" and seeking ways to hook the audience into the story. Many students ignored this key word and wrote in general terms about what the actors might do.
- Most answers focused on creating intrigue through the transformation of the characters from present day to the Victorian times, with very useful detail of not only costume change but physical and vocal transformation.
- Most students recognised that the 'actors' were not actually 'the characters' from the novel until after the 'beat' at line 37, after which the sisters speak in first person plural including some lines delivered in first person singular towards the end of the extract.
- Some subtle answers suggested a gradual transformation starting on "She looks too fat", as the actors begin to defend the characters they will play. By the line "Sunk without a trace" these answers suggested the change would be complete and there was detail of the sisters' positioning, some suggesting the portrait painted by Bramwell.
- There was good detail indicating the characterisation of the sisters at this early stage in terms of their delivery and performance, with Anne being wistful in tone compared to Charlotte's more matter-of-fact delivery. The delivery of the ominous "Governess" was well expressed with physical response of horror.

Q 20.2

- There were some good answers on the character of Emily with some understanding of her yearning for freedom and the circumstances which constricted her. A few answers over-emphasised her wildness and the disarray of her appearance which showed a less secure understanding of her situation in relation to her father's position and her relationship with Charlotte.
- There was good understanding of her references to her mother's absence, and some comedic interpretations of her mimicking "tea parties" and disgust at "eligible men". These were in keeping with the interpretations given and established clear contrasts to her sisters.
- There was some appreciation of her more mysterious character, particularly in her delivery to audience with her use of tone and delivery. Students suggested a range of interpretations from teasing or regretful, to angry or resentful. These interpretations were all justifiable. Her relationship with Charlotte was well explored in lines 88 to 95, with students offering commentary on her strident or spiteful tone of voice and her intense focus on Charlotte's face.
- Her independence of spirit was frequently suggested with reference to her little room, with the lines being delivered almost secretively, but with relish.

- Her final line in this section was clearly understood by most students and its importance was emphasised in both delivery and the character's still focus.
- The vast majority of answers were clear and detailed, showing good understanding and sound interpretation.
- At least a third of all answers failed to address the Question focus which required students to identify and then offer performance ideas to achieve a preferred audience response to the role; this affected students' ability to access the higher mark bands.

## Q 20.3

- Few answers chose to write about set design in isolation.
- There were some useful designs which suggested the style of the production with most suggesting a composite set. Set designs included the demands of movement and some included reference to the 'omni-presence' of the outdoors, representing the outside world, seen through a window or physically present on set. In better answers, students referred to the expressionist style embraced by Shared Experience.
- All the answers seen made reference to the central table which was described in design detail of colour and worn condition and was appropriate to the period. All students referenced the importance of the books with some paying more attention to the workability of the set and the action. For example, some suggestions had the stage "littered" with books which would have made movement restricted. A few answers considered the whole text with books suspended above the stage to become "birds" in the final scene.
- Designs generally used good colour palettes reflecting the Victorian interior and using browns and greys to suggest the rather gloomy and claustrophobic parsonage.
- Given the abundance of 'historical' material available both in books and online, it was disappointing to see how few students actually understood the living conditions of the Bronte family and their respectable position in their community.
- Students should research or be made aware of the Bronte's real family home -the Haworth Parsonage. The living room/dining room in the parsonage, with its dark mahogany furniture, dining table and matching chairs, complemented with comfortable settees, cushions, a fireplace with elegant mantelpiece above, pictures on the walls, and various ornaments in abundance might have informed students' understanding.
- As it was, there appeared to be a widespread belief that the sisters lived in abject poverty, both in their descriptions and in their sketches, many students referred to a cheap pinewood table with mismatched and/or broken chairs – scruffy rugs and grime.
- A variety of costume designs were offered with a varying degree of security in interpretation. For example, although not wealthy, it is unlikely that the sisters' clothes would be ragged, even Emily, or obviously darned and patched as this would not accord with the family's status in the community. However, worn or dowdy costumes would be appropriate.
- Most students had a reasonable grasp of the Victorian style, in their costume designs and referred to or reflected in their sketches the correct shape and fit, but it was surprising to note that a few designs had Emily in below-knee length skirts, which would not be appropriate.
- There were few suggestions for Patrick or Bramwell, and these tended to be cursory.
- Sketches were generally clear, and the diagrams were well labelled.
- Only a few students referred to both an appropriate period and to an appropriate production style – the requirements of the question - and this affected their ability to access the higher mark bands.

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## Section C

As in previous series, there were some ill-judged production/question combinations seen in answers to Section C questions, where a student's favourite production was considered in relation to an unsuitable question.

### Q 21

This was not a popular question but attracted some detailed answers.

- The majority of students who selected this question chose a musical theatre production. Possibly because of the greater flamboyance in some of the styles of production.
- There were detailed realisations of the costumes from "Hamilton" for example, which not only considered the design elements in detail but showed secure understanding of period. The meaning created in terms of characterisation was clear in this example, showing the development of the central character from humble beginnings to prosperity.
- There was also useful reference to Simon Stone's "Yerma", where the successful character of "Her" is characterised by her smart designer style at the beginning of the play and contrasted by her oversized, tatty pullover in the final scene, suggesting a lack of care and self-worth.
- The use of period was well managed, and there were helpful examples of fit. There were also some good references to colour, for example the predominance of grey in "Jane Eyre" when Jane is both with her aunt and at school, to suggest her character's feelings in both these settings. Some students did go into considerable and unsupported detail of colour symbolism, however. An audience would not necessarily associate the colour blue with "virginity, innocence and sexuality", as just one example.
- Some students wrote about a production of 'Oh What a Lovely War', however, as the question required focus on how the costume designer 'revealed aspects on character' through their designs, answers that explored ways in which the nationality of individual countries were stereotyped by the designs, did not match the brief.
- Most answers were supported by clear, well labelled diagrams which supported the text of the answers.

### Q 22

- This question was a minority choice, but it attracted some very good answers.
- Most of the work seen on sound was successful with some exceptional work being submitted.
- Although potentially appropriate, there were few particularly successful responses to students writing about musical productions. The problem for most students seemed to be a lack of attention to how a singer or band/orchestra, used their voice or instrument(s) to create the mood being discussed, all too frequently in these cases there was a deal of assertion in the analysis/evaluation.
- Some students had clearly drawn on their own skills and interests and were able to describe the moods and atmospheres created through sound design with some assured use of technical terminology.
- Responses to this question were based on a wide range of production styles and all, from the most naturalistic to the use of companies like Gecko, elicited a range of responses. Where style was carefully explained in the introductory paragraph and the sound designers' role in this style considered, examiners were able to identify a focus. Where students had carefully considered the role the sound design in a production prior to the examination, this question generated some thoughtful responses.

- However, examiners reported a number of instances where although sound was considered, and often in some detail, there was an almost complete lack of applying this knowledge to the creation of mood and atmosphere.
- In the best responses, students set the context of the moment being evaluated, explained the mood in relation to the action on stage, and then described in some detail, the effects being created.
- There were some very useful explanations of the way that music/sound underscored moments of dialogue to enhance or alter the audiences' perception of the action. Where students were able to describe in detail and use the terminology of music, the aural experience really came to life.
- Productions that were clearly sound reliant, produced some excellent responses and there were some vivid explanations of various moments from Curious Incident of the dog in the night-time. There was some technical understanding of diegetic and non-diegetic sound, and references were made to the positioning of speakers to create effects, for example the positioning of speakers around the auditorium in Curious Incident to immerse the audience in the sounds of a busy station emphasising the main character's fear and discomfort.
- Whilst a brief explanation of the accompanying visual effects can be useful to set the moment, there were occasions where students lost focus and started to describe the visuals in more detail than the sound.
- Students often recognised the qualities of the instruments used, for example contrasting the effects created by strings or tympany, and were often able to reference the specific pieces of music or the composer. References were also made to music which was commissioned for the production, showing some knowledge.
- There was exceptional work on "Frankenstein", for example, with the qualities of the music being well described and the overlay of industrial sounds at the Creature's birth being clearly indicative of atmosphere and the production aims. Some answers showed detailed musical understanding, for example the use of the pedals on the piano music, but several students, despite not demonstrating this specific knowledge, described pitch, volume and intensity with great clarity. There was helpful use of comparison, for example the ticking metronome "reminds the audience of a clock and suggests time passing and urgency", to make these descriptions vivid.
- In many responses, the way in which a student explained their technical understanding impacted on the relative success or otherwise of the response; simply listing the names/types of the technical equipment used without exploring their effects, did little to explain how mood or atmosphere was created.
- On the whole, these were impressive and accomplished answers.
- Whilst completely acceptable to write about streamed productions, it was apparent that some students found it difficult to assess the impact of sound through a single speaker. For those students who attempted to write about Complicite's The Encounter, although identifying the use of the binaural microphone, there was little sense of how the mood was created as the initial experience was dependant on the audience wearing headphones.
- In regard to writing about the contribution of the sound to the Total Dramatic Effectiveness, there were many clear examples of how the creation of mood/atmosphere was highly significant to an audience's experience and understanding of the production, and where this was fluently expressed, examiners had a real sense that this part of the examination's demands, were not being considered merely as an adjunct.

#### Q 23

- This was a very popular choice for Section C and many answers, when they focused precisely on the terms of the question, were completed successfully.
- Degrees of success were determined by two major factors:

- understanding what is meant by a ‘naturalistic character’, and thereby choosing an appropriate production (and role within that production) to exemplify a naturalistic performance.
- precise focus on the vocal and physical skills of the performer.
- As with all Section C answers, the choice of production was key. Some excellent work was seen on productions of *All My Sons*, *A View from the Bridge* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*; other good choices included *Medea*, *Small Island*, *Things I Know to Be True* and *Jane Eyre* almost all of which were watched via some form of digital theatre.
- While not all of these productions are ‘naturalistic’ in terms of production style, those that include physical theatre or are expressionist in concept still demand naturalistic acting skills for the most part, and more sensitive students were able to distinguish between production style and performance style.
- Most answers were able to provide some detail on the style of the production, its form and production aims, even if these aspects were then largely ignored. Including these details about the chosen production is an important part of each question’s demand accounting for the AO3 award out of 5 marks. Students should be advised that, although this is a ‘low-tariff’ objective, in relation to the AO4 mark of 20, it is fairly easily gained and not to be disregarded in an examination where, of course, every mark counts.
- The most successful provided clear detail of the selected performers’ use of skills and how that enabled the chosen performer to achieve a naturalistic performance.
- Some students selected wholly inappropriate plays/roles for this question. One of the most frequently seen examples of this was where students, in their droves, wrote at length about the birth of Frankenstein’s monster, as played by Benedict Cumberbatch. Another unfortunate choice was the role of Iphigenia in *Iphigenia in Splott*, where the main character, Effie, talks directly to the audience for 75 minutes.
- Students often struggle to identify and analyse performance skills – a demand of this Question - and they frequently display a very limited range of performance skills to draw upon when they are answering performance-based questions in Sections A and B. This limitation was put under a spotlight in answers to this question, which required discussion of naturalistic acting.
- It was very noticeable to examiners that only students whose theatrical vocabulary extended beyond the usual tropes of ‘clenching’, ‘scrunching’, ‘frowning’ etc were able to accurately reflect a sensitive performance such as *Blanche Dubois*, *Eddie Carbone* or, indeed, *Pip* from *TIKTBT*, in their discussion of naturalistic acting.

## Q 24

- This was the most popular choice of question in this section and examiners reported seeing a full range of successful outcomes. There were many detailed and focussed responses that revealed a good understanding of the requirements of the question.
- Better responses established, early on in the answer, exactly what aspects of storytelling techniques were being used. These included examples of narration, direct address, re-enactment, mime and naturalistic characterisation.
- Better answers also included clear explanations as to what element of the ‘story’ was being told and then how the particular examples offered, related to the total dramatic effectiveness of the production.
- Good examples of how this was linked to TDE included reference to the significance of theme, a character’s arc, or a moment when the audience’s perception of the narrative was altered or reinforced. In some instances, students’ responses to this element were either entirely overlooked or discussed in overly literary terms.
- One of the single biggest issues in a lack of success in answering this question was that some students simply re-told the story of the moment with virtually no reference to performance skills.

- As is always the case with performance-based questions, the development of an extensive vocabulary that brings the performers' actions to life, significantly helps to evoke, for the examiner, the moment being discussed. As mentioned above, reliance on, for example: increasing volume, lowering pitch, changing pace or opening or closing of proxemics (a highly dubious and nebulous concept and one not to be encouraged) does not succeed in conveying the subtleties of a performer's skills to the reader/examiner.
- Most students recognised the requirement to consider two or more performers, sometimes this was achieved through a consideration of individual performers at separate moments or, largely more successfully, as the performers together. Where students adopted this approach, the examples given were generally more nuanced as actions and reactions were considered, this was particularly true in examples from more naturalistic productions.
- Few students considered the way an ensemble helped to tell the story, although there were some reasonable examples from some physical theatre pieces.
- Frantic Assembly's work continues to be very popular but some students, although attempting to use the physical moments from Lovesong and Things I know to be True, to demonstrate story-telling techniques, failed to provide enough detail to be make their descriptions intelligible to any reader who had not seen the production. For example, descriptions of characters dropping through holes in beds, meant very little to anyone who had not seen the play in production.
- A sign that students lack discrimination in their approach to performance questions in Section C was very evident this year in the number of instances where a student appeared to have written about a production and then changed their mind about whether it was an answer to Q 23 or to Q 24. A significant number of students wrote about more than one performer in answer to Q 23 while some answers to Q 24 focused on a single performer.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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