

DRAMA

Paper 9482/11
Open-Book Written Examination

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

DRAMA

<p>Paper 9482/12 Open-Book Written Examination</p>

Key messages

This examination paper assesses candidates' ability to demonstrate their understanding of how texts may be interpreted in the theatre to convey meaning to an audience in relation to the prescribed extracts/texts and the precise question focus.

Questions in this Drama paper will always have a practical theatre focus and candidates should be reminded that their interpretation of the selected set texts must be expressed using the language of the theatre.

Candidates are expected to have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the plot, the characters and the themes of their selected texts as a foundation upon which to build their theatrical interpretation of the plays, from the perspectives of director, performer or designer.

It is important that candidates adopt the perspective that is demanded by the question; for example, if the question requires a performer's perspective, they should write in the first person as a performer. The same principle applies to questions intended to be from a designer's or a director's perspective.

Candidates are reminded to ensure that, before beginning to write their answers, they have read and understood the precise requirements of each of the questions that they choose.

Material that is irrelevant or peripheral to the question focus does not attract credit, so candidates are urged to avoid straying from the precise question focus in their responses.

It is important to understand that although it may be useful to offer a brief contextualisation of the action in the prescribed extract in **Section A** and/or in their selected sections, in **Section B**, candidates are not required to offer a summary of the play's action in either section of the paper.

Candidates must demonstrate explicitly in their answers that they have secure knowledge and understanding of each play's style, genre and performance context and that these aspects have been considered in their interpretation of each text.

General comments

Many very good answers were seen in this, the first Autumn series of a new syllabus.

The cohort was relatively small in this series. Texts studied were *The Country Wife* and *Death of a Salesman* in **Section A** and *Medea* and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* in **Section B**.

Candidates' responses suggested that they had found the questions accessible, and many candidates tackled the precise demands of individual questions in a focused way.

The most successful answers were those where the candidates had used direct references to the text to support detailed practical ideas, allowing the examiner to envisage the stage action for the chosen moments or sections.

Very good answers also demonstrated a secure grasp of theatrical terminology which was applied purposefully to support artistic ideas.

In less successful answers, candidates often revealed quite limited understanding of appropriate theatrical vocabulary and were consequently unable to articulate their ideas, especially in answer to questions about design and/or technical elements.

Some candidates offered overly narrative or literary responses.

Some candidates made little or no explicit reference to the style, genre or context of their selected text which resulted in very low scores for this criterion – which is worth a third of the total marks for this paper.

Several candidates made reference to the production history of their set plays, or they commented on how previous directors and performers had approach a role or scene. However, unless such references are made relevant to the focus of the question or to the candidate's own interpretation of a role or scene, these references could attract little credit and acted merely as a distraction.

Candidates should be reminded that, especially when they are writing about a text in translation such as *Medea*, they need to be very clear about which part of the play they are dealing with, as different editions/translations can be vastly different from one another.

Candidates should never identify sections of text by quoting page numbers, line numbers or truncated phrases from the text linked with ellipses. They should, instead, use 'complete' short phrases or lines of text to support practical performance suggestions.

Most candidates timed their answers well and produced two developed pieces of writing.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 2

The Country Wife

(a) How would you direct selected moments from the extract to create comedy for your audience?

Very few responses to this question were seen. Nevertheless, it is pleasing to report that candidates who approached this text demonstrated a fairly secure understanding of the Restoration style.

The question demanded the creation of comedy and answers varied according to which parts of the extract were explored and which of the characters were considered in terms of their comic potential.

There were some inventive responses focused on Lady Fidget's entrance from the locked room, where some envisaged her being in a 'dishevelled' state. There was some useful attention paid to the delivery of the *double entendres* that pass between Lady Fidget and Horner. The banter over the 'china', involving the other ladies as they vied for Horner's 'attention', formed the focus for some apt directorial suggestions.

Other answers found much scope for comedy in the section where Pinchwife delivers Margery's letter to a bewildered Horner. There was some quite subtle direction of the individual character's facial expressions and interactions with the audience, capturing Pinchwife's misplaced smugness, thinking that he had dealt Horner a blow to his pride, while Horner first puzzled over, then revelled in, the trick that Margery had successfully pulled off.

Less successful responses did not maintain a focus on comedy, or their suggestions lacked true comic potential.

Candidates revealed understanding of Restoration conventions and exploited the actor/audience relationship to add to the comedy.

(b) How would you perform the role of HORNER in selected moments from the extract to convey his attitudes towards women?

There were few responses to this question but those who chose it appeared to relish the opportunity to explore Horner's outrageous objectification of his female 'friends' and offered many apt performance ideas to highlight his attitudes.

While some candidates acknowledged that Horner's sexist and predatory approach to women is reprehensible, this did not prevent them from maximising the comedy to be extracted from his highly sexualised exchanges with the 'ladies'.

Some candidates presented Horner's 'two-faced' qualities in a literal way, altering his physical stance as well as his delivery style when talking to/flirting with the 'women' in an overly charming way before switching into a more neutral mode in his exchanges with Sir Jasper and with Pinchwife.

Less successful responses did not maintain a focus on Horner's attitudes towards women but strayed into more general aspects of his character.

In terms of displaying knowledge and understanding of the style, genre and context of the play, some successful answers made purposeful reference to Restoration acting conventions and to the role of the 'Rake' in Restoration drama. Candidates were clearly knowledgeable about the combination of 'manners' and bawdiness in Restoration plays.

Question 3

Death of a Salesman

(a) How would you perform the role of WILLY in selected moments from the extract to convey his feelings of love and pride for the younger Biff?

This question attracted many responses. The strongest answers were written in the first person as the performer playing Willy. Most candidates understood that the extract reveals Willy's 'interior' experience as he remembers/conjures up incidents from the past when Biff and Happy were teenagers and he was a revered figure in their lives.

There were several excellent responses and almost all candidates wrote about the way in which 're-living' the past had a rejuvenating effect on Willy's posture, movement and voice. Candidates wrote of a shift from the aging and depressed figure who had returned, defeated, from his aborted sales trip to someone with an optimistic demeanour, a 'spring in his step', bright eyes and with a happy smile on his face.

Candidates noted an energetic rhythm to Willy's movement, a cheery tone in his voice and his many expressions of surprise and amazement in Biff's achievements. They offered ideas for Willy's excited appreciation of Biff's many talents, of his captaincy of the football team, of his popularity with the girls and even of his misdemeanours (appropriating a new football) which Willy classifies as 'initiative'. The focus of the question was on conveying Willy's love for and pride in young Biff and many candidates kept this focus clearly to the fore in their answers.

One or two candidates offered a slightly different approach by comparing Willy's enthusiasm for Biff with his apparent indifference to Happy's existence and they did this to the detriment of their answers. While some material about Willy's favouritism was valid, relevant and credit-worthy, a few answers made this the absolute focus of their responses.

Better answers concentrated on love and pride in Biff and there were useful examples of Willy's eye-contact with Biff and his frequent physical expressions of closeness, be it through tousling his hair, slapping him on the back or play-fighting moments.

In terms of displaying knowledge and understanding of the style, genre and context of the play, more successful answers made purposeful reference to Miller's intentions to present a modern tragedy.

Candidates often referred to the importance of 'The American Dream' and to the fact that this section reflects how Willy once held it dear.

Most candidates revealed, through the nature of their performance suggestions, that they understood the naturalistic style of performance required.

- (b) As a director, explain how you would stage selected moments from the extract to convey an appropriate atmosphere as Willy becomes absorbed in his memories of earlier, happier times. You should refer to both performance and staging elements.**

Answers to this question were less plentiful than those on **Question 3(a)**, but there were still many confident responses seen.

One notable trend in answers to **Question 3(b)** was a tendency of candidates to offer a narration of the action rather than a direction of it.

This question required attention to both performance and staging elements so that candidates who omitted one or the other were bound to under-achieve.

There were many sound answers seen, that focused on creating an appropriate atmosphere for the audience. Candidates suggested a range of potentially appropriate atmospheres, from 'happy' to 'nostalgic' to 'elegiac'. These were generally intended to be achieved through ideas for lighting and sound both diegetic and non-diegetic.

In terms of lighting, some candidates offered ideas for the use of warm coloured washes, spotlights or hazers. Others focused on or included ideas for sound such as recorded sounds of bird-song or recorded music to suggest a radio (off-stage) playing up-beat music of the period. These ideas were often well-justified and occasionally explained using appropriate technical terminology.

Some candidates appeared to lack confidence in discussing design elements and some appeared not to understand Miller's intention to use a composite setting.

Most strong answers included close attention to the delivery of lines and to the movement and interaction of all three of the characters involved in the scene.

Some candidates chose to focus on Willy's unbalanced treatment of his sons, which was sometimes made relevant to the chosen atmosphere. Most candidates appreciated that the extract revealed a 'golden' memory for Willy as a time before his 'feet of clay' were revealed to his favourite son and these candidates' ideas were calculated to achieve a sense of the simple pleasures of a happy family life.

See comments above for ways in which some candidates displayed their knowledge and understanding of the style, genre and context of the play.

Question 6

Medea

- (a) Explain how your direction of the NURSE, at the start of the play and in her interactions with other characters, would achieve your dramatic intentions for the audience.**

There were no answers to this question.

- (b) Explain how you would perform the role of MEDEA in two separate sections of the play to emphasise her ruthlessness.**

Only a handful of responses to this question were seen.

Some answers were well developed and focused on the question which revolved around showing Medea's ruthlessness.

There were some fairly liberal interpretations of the quality of 'ruthlessness' with some candidates considering aspects such as Medea's lack of empathy to equate to her being ruthless.

Some candidates ignored the question's focus completely in favour of a more general and possibly pre-prepared response about the role of Medea.

Some candidates spent too long writing about Medea's physical appearance and about her costume(s). Only when such details contributed to emphasising her ruthlessness (which is difficult to achieve through costume alone) were these ideas credit-worthy.

Stronger answers contained a clear focus on emphasising Medea's ruthlessness. Candidates made judicious selection of sections where the audience see Medea at her most ruthless, in engineering the slaughter of Jason's new bride and father-in-law, for example, or in the section where she gloats over the Messenger's gory description of the death throes of her victims. Other useful selections included her final confrontation with Jason where she denies him access to the murdered infants and taunts him in his abject despair.

In some of these answers, candidates brought Medea's ruthless nature vividly to life through detailed attention to the delivery of key phrases or lines including reference to how, as a performer, they would dominate the stage and strike fear into the audience using aspects of vocal, physical and facial expression.

In some answers, although the term 'ruthless' was used repeatedly, the focus was elsewhere.

In terms of displaying knowledge and understanding of the style, genre and context of the play, there were some answers seen that discussed the form and origins of Classical Greek tragedy. Some referred to the mythological background to Medea's and Jason's relationship and this was occasionally referred to in support of staging ideas. Some candidates used the terminology of classical Greek theatre throughout.

Question 9

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

(a) How would you direct two separate sections where CHRISTOPHER and MRS ALEXANDER appear together, to create your intended dramatic effects?

Only a few answers were seen.

Better answers always started with direct focus on the terms of the question and candidates made clear statements about the dramatic effects that they intended to create through their direction of Christopher's encounters with Mrs Alexander. Most frequently, candidates suggested the effect of comedy, mainly created through Christopher's literal understanding of language and through the revelation of his multiple dislikes.

Some candidates did not reveal their directorial intentions at all, thus rendering any directions that they suggested somewhat 'pointless'.

Candidates tended to choose the first two meetings between Christopher and Mrs Alexander, when Christopher is conducting his 'house-to-house' enquiries and when Mrs Alexander reveals that Judy and Mr Shears had been in an intimate relationship.

Some candidates attempted to do 'too much' in their treatment of the exchanges between Christopher and Mrs Alexander by offering rather too much narrative detail about the wider play at the expense of offering detailed directions for the pair in specific sections.

Better answers revealed an awareness of the play's structure and its dependence upon a series of duologues and ensemble sequences, without losing the main focus of directing a pair of actors to create specific effects. In these answers, candidates discussed Christopher's traits of avoiding physical contact as well as eye-contact and his inability to 'read' signs of friendliness in Mrs Alexander's questions and comments. They considered Mrs Alexander's need for company and her empathy for Christopher.

Less strong answers misunderstood the relationship between Christopher and Mrs Alexander and/or portrayed Mrs Alexander as very 'needy' and desperate to create a Grandmother/grandson relationship with Christopher.

Apart from recognising the ensemble nature of the play, there were few references to the context or genre of the play.

(b) How would you perform the role of SIOBHAN in two or more separate sections of the play in order to convey her caring attitude towards Christopher?

Very few answers to this question were seen.

Although candidates recognised Siobhan's caring attitude towards Christopher, they did not always put this aspect of her role at the forefront of their answer. Some wrote almost exclusively about Siobhan's narrative function.

Where candidates did focus on the role 'in the round' and explored Siobhan's interactions with Christopher, better answers considered all the aspects of performance that an actor could use to demonstrate 'care' including spatial relationships and eye-contact as well as tone of voice, caring demeanour and delivery of key lines.

Some candidates acknowledged that Siobhan's scenes of interaction with Christopher are brief but that they act cumulatively to convey her importance to Christopher in attaining his academic goals as well as in adjusting to day to day challenges. In these answers, Siobhan's role as mentor was considered and judged to be both caring and professional.

Some of the answers seen were extremely brief and under-developed.

References to style, genre and context were rarely made explicitly.

DRAMA

Paper 9482/13
Open-Book Written Examination

Key messages

This examination paper assesses candidates' ability to demonstrate their understanding of how texts may be interpreted in the theatre to convey meaning to an audience in relation to the prescribed extracts/texts and the precise question focus.

Questions in this Drama paper will always have a practical theatre focus and candidates should be reminded that their interpretation of the selected set texts must be expressed using the language of the theatre.

Candidates are expected to have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the plot, the characters and the themes of their selected texts as a foundation upon which to build their theatrical interpretation of the plays, from the perspectives of director, performer or designer.

It is important that candidates adopt the perspective that is demanded by the question; for example, if the question requires a performer's perspective, they should write in the first person as a performer. The same principle applies to questions intended to be from a designer's or a director's perspective.

Candidates are reminded to ensure that, before beginning to write their answers, they have read and understood the precise requirements of each of the questions that they choose.

Material that is irrelevant or peripheral to the question focus does not attract credit, so candidates are urged to avoid straying from the precise question focus in their responses.

It is important to understand that although it may be useful to offer a brief contextualisation of the action in the prescribed extract in **Section A** and/or in their selected sections, in **Section B**, candidates are not required to offer a summary of the play's action in either section of the paper.

Candidates must demonstrate explicitly in their answers that they have secure knowledge and understanding of each play's style, genre and performance context and that these aspects have been considered in their interpretation of each text.

General comments

Many very good answers were seen in this, the first Autumn series of a new syllabus.

The cohort was relatively small in this series. Texts studied were *The Tempest* and *Death of a Salesman* in **Section A** and *Medea*, *The Seagull* and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* in **Section B**.

Candidates' responses suggested that they had found the questions accessible, and many candidates tackled the precise demands of individual questions in a focused way.

The most successful answers were those where the candidates had used direct references to the text to support detailed practical ideas, allowing the examiner to envisage the stage action for the chosen moments or sections.

Very good answers also demonstrated a secure grasp of theatrical terminology which was applied purposefully to support artistic ideas.

In less successful answers, candidates often revealed quite limited understanding of appropriate theatrical vocabulary and were consequently unable to articulate their ideas, especially in answer to questions about design and/or technical elements.

Some candidates offered overly narrative or literary responses.

Some candidates made little or no explicit reference to the style, genre or context of their selected text which resulted in very low scores for this criterion - which is worth a third of the total marks for this paper.

Several candidates made reference to the production history of their set plays, or they commented on how previous directors and performers had approach a role or scene. However, unless such references are made relevant to the focus of the question or to the candidate's own interpretation of a role or scene, these references could attract little credit and acted merely as a distraction.

Candidates should be reminded that, especially when they are writing about a text in translation such as *Medea*, they need to be very clear about which part of the play they are dealing with, as different editions/translations can be vastly different from one another.

Candidates should never identify sections of text by quoting page numbers, line numbers or truncated phrases from the text linked with ellipses. They should, instead, use 'complete' short phrases or lines of text to support practical performance suggestions.

Most candidate timed their answers well and produced two developed pieces of writing.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The Tempest

- (a) **As a director, what dramatic effects would you want to create for the audience through your staging of selected moments from the extract? Explain how you would achieve your intentions.**

A significant discriminator amongst candidates was in their various interpretations of what might be desirable 'dramatic effects' to aim for in this section of the play. Some wanted to charm or amaze the audience through the harmonious nature of the Shapes, others to shock the audience through the terrifying appearance of the Harpy, while others focused on eliciting sympathy for Gonzalo in his bewilderment.

Some candidates confined themselves to directorial suggestions for the cast of actors and there were some successful responses that focused mainly on the movement, gestures, facial expressions and the delivery of key lines by the actors in the extract.

Ariel's appearance as a Harpy featured in most candidates' responses. The horrified reactions of Alonso and his retinue to Ariel's pronouncement were creatively presented in better answers.

Other candidates understood that directors have a range of staging resources to choose from and they did not limit themselves to the direction of the actors.

These candidates widened the scope of their directions to include lighting and sound and scenic devices, such as projections, holograms and/or trap-doors or use of flown scenery or actors that allowed the 'magic' to unfold before the audience's eyes.

In terms of displaying knowledge and understanding of the style, genre and context of the play, some candidates made purposeful reference to Jacobean staging conventions. Some referred to the Jacobean interest in spirits and the supernatural and others commented on the fear of treason and usurpation in the Elizabethan and Jacobean era.

(b) How would you perform the role of ALONSO in selected moments from the extract, to convey his shifting emotions of despair, amazement and guilt?

Most candidates focused on the demands of the question and considered Alonso's display of despair over the loss of Ferdinand, his amazement at the sudden appearance of the mysterious banquet and his guilt when confronted with the truth about his betrayal of Prospero.

Candidates referred to Alonso's physical appearance and his changing facial expressions. In better answers, there was good focus on his changing emotions conveyed through tone of voice and the delivery of specific lines. Candidates who quoted key phrases or sentences fared better than those who used line numbers or who offered truncated quotations linked via ellipses.

Some candidates were over-reliant on stating 'I would emphasise this line' without further qualification. There are so many possible ways to 'emphasise' a line – be it vocal or physical – so it is important for candidates to nominate precise dramatic methods of emphasis, be it through change in pace or volume or the addition of a gesture or action. Better candidates who used 'emphasis' as a dramatic method focused on single words or phrases within lines rather than suggesting that a complete sentence or speech might be 'emphasised'.

Weaker responses focused exclusively on Alonso, as if he were the only character on stage. Better answers included his interactions with other characters, be it through eye-contact or a hand on the shoulder or turning/moving towards or away from another character, in addition to considering his delivery of key lines to other characters.

Most candidates adopted the performer's perspective required by the question although there were some answers that were written in a narrative way, and in the third person.

In terms of displaying knowledge and understanding of the style, genre and context of the play, some successful answers made purposeful reference to acting conventions in Shakespearean drama. Others allowed their decision to adopt a purely 'presentational style' of acting, that they ascribed to the period, to remove some subtleties from their interpretation of Alonso's different states of mind.

References to Sumptuary laws and to the theory of the 'four humours', that pre-dated, by far, Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, were not always made relevant.

Question 3

Death of a Salesman

(a) How would you perform the role of HAPPY in the extract to convey your interpretation of his character?

Too few responses were seen on this question to make constructive comment.

(b) Explain how your direction of WILLY and BIFF, in selected moments from the extract, would help to convey their inability to communicate with one another.

There were only a few answers to this question.

Where candidates focused on the demands of the question, some good responses were seen. However, although candidates appeared to understand the troubled father-son relationship, only better answers contained detailed directions calculated to convey the characters' communication problems to an audience.

Some candidates wrote general essays about Willy and Biff that were not related to the prescribed extract.

In terms of displaying knowledge and understanding of the style, genre and context of the play, some candidates made purposeful reference to Miller's intentions to present a modern tragedy and some interpreted both Willy and Biff as 'tragic' figures.

Candidates also discussed the importance of 'The American Dream' and its relevance both to Willy, a firm adherent to it and Biff, who had rejected it.

Through the nature of their performance suggestions, candidates often implied that they understood the naturalistic style of performance required.

Question 6

Medea

- (a) **Explain how your direction of MEDEA in her interactions with Creon and with Aegeus would help to convey the complexity of her character to your audience.**

Few candidates attempted this question. Of these, a number of responses were slightly outweighed by details of classical Greek staging conventions so that Medea's performance received fewer concrete practical directions than was desirable. However, some workable interpretations of the chosen sections were seen.

There was a tendency to concentrate in more detail on Medea's interaction with Creon rather than on her exchanges with Aegeus. Perhaps, candidates found Medea's blatant duplicity with Creon easier to communicate to an audience. A number of answers focused on Medea's ability to feign submissiveness although some candidates included a decided complicity with the audience on Medea's part that bordered on melodrama.

Potentially effective practical staging ideas also contributed to candidates' interpretation and often communicated a clear practical sense of theatre from a director's point of view. More than one candidate focused too much on including references to a range of contradictory, largely contemporary, theatre practices and not enough on answering the question as set.

- (b) **Explain how you would perform the role of JASON in two separate sections of the play, to convey your interpretation of his character.**

A handful of candidates attempted this question. Some of them misread the precise demands of the question and they wrote from the perspective of a director rather than as a performer.

Another mistake was not to notice that the question demanded an 'interpretation' of Jason's character. Without stating an interpretation of Jason, for example, 'disloyal', 'patronising', 'arrogant' or 'gullible', any performance suggestions for Jason that were offered were unfocused.

A number of answers accorded rather more attention to Jason's physical appearance and/or costume than was strictly necessary. Indeed, only ideas that contributed to interpreting his character were credit-worthy. Some candidates suggested Jason's arrogance and/or vanity through his choice of costume, and these ideas were therefore relevant.

Occasionally, candidates wasted time by describing the setting that they wished to use for the play as a whole rather than focussing on the actual demands of the question.

Some candidates offered two very brief 'snapshots' of Jason, usually describing his first and his last appearances. Some candidates only wrote about one section.

In terms of demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the style, genre and context of the play, there were some answers seen that discussed the formal constituents of Classical Greek tragedy. Some alluded to the origins of the form and to the role of the god, Dionysus.

Some candidates referenced the mythological tale that forms the basis of the drama. Medea's and Jason's relationship 'history' was also occasionally noted. Some candidates used the terminology of classical Greek theatre in terms of the positioning of the characters on stage.

Question 8

The Seagull

- (a) **Explain how your direction of two or more separate sections of the play would demonstrate the troubled relationship between KONSTANTIN and his mother, ARKADINA.**

Only a handful of candidates answered this question.

Most wrote about the sparring between mother and son in Act One at the performance of Konstantin's play. The second section chosen was in Act Three when Arkadina is refreshing Konstantin's bandages.

Candidates were generally focused on exploring the troubled mother-son relationship. They recognised Arkadina's role in agitating her son through her critical approach to his work and there was some awareness of the mutual antagonism between them - belying a fundamental mother/child bond.

The demand to discuss how their direction would demonstrate the troubled relationship was generally understood by the candidates and better answers noted subtle changes in the nature of the relationship in the course of the play. There were some sensitive readings of the characters who some interpreted as being polar opposites while others saw similar character traits in Arkadina and Konstantin - such as insecurity and self-centredness - as the source of many of the tensions between them.

Use of text to support directorial ideas and bring the sections to 'life' was a discriminating factor.

The style, genre and context of the play was only loosely referred to, although a generally naturalistic approach to direction was evident.

- (b) **How would you perform the role of NINA in two or more separate sections of the play, to convey the development of her character.**

Too few responses were seen on this question to make constructive comment.

Question 9

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

- (a) **What dramatic effects would you want to achieve through your direction of two separate sections of the play that show CHRISTOPHER interacting with authority figures? Explain how you would achieve your intentions.**

Very few responses to this question were seen.

Candidates appeared not to understand the concept of 'authority figures' and they wrote apparently randomly about Christopher interacting with any adult character.

The notion of 'interaction' also seemed to be problematical and while one or two candidates did write about the dialogue, the most frequent approach was a narrative one with few appropriate directorial strategies considered.

There were negligible references to the style or genre of the play, beyond a passing reference to the ensemble.

- (b) **As an ensemble member playing two roles, explain how you would use performance skills and costume to create different characters.**

Choose one of the following pairs of characters:

- 1 Mrs Alexander and Punk Girl**
- 2 Reverend Peters and Station Policeman**

Too few responses were seen on this question to make constructive comment.

DRAMA

Paper 9482/02
Practical Drama

Key messages

- The choice of text and the amount of exposure for each candidate is vital in ensuring that all candidates can achieve their full potential.
- Strong performances had a sense of occasion, which was often helped by a live audience.
- Effective devised work was often the product of creative interpretation of a stimulus – the ability to stage live performance from text, image or sound.

Administration

- As in June 2021, centres responded well to the challenge in the context of COVID-19 restrictions. It was encouraging to see how naturally candidates adapted to performing in face coverings or visors; Moderators reported that this had minimal impact on the performance work.
- Several centres made arrangements for performances to take place outdoors, which enabled a larger audience to be present. This was particularly effective when the sound quality of the recording was good.
- The quality of the moderation documentation was generally good and there were relatively few inaccuracies on the ICMS forms. There were a few isolated examples of centres merely reproducing the assessment criteria rather than identifying features of the work that had been credited.
- Most centres submitted their candidates' performances on USB sticks, which worked well. Work submitted on DVD proved more problematic, especially as some had been damaged in transit.

Devised Piece (30 marks)

Several successful pieces were based on historical situations that offered a ready-made narrative line. These were drawn from a range of times and cultures, which allowed candidates to reinterpret these in their own cultural settings. Notable examples included the fight for female suffrage, the Salem Witch Trials of 1692/93, and the sinking of the Titanic. Some groups focused their devised piece on an investigation of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and these were more variable in their effectiveness. The most powerful pieces were those that worked well despite distanced physicality, often showing mature spatial awareness of how characters could relate to each other.

A number of pieces were based on images, which also included street art and performance installations. These provided candidates with the opportunity to explore sound and space without the need to create naturalistic drama. Some notable work made good use of extended vocal technique and the creation of soundscape.

There were many examples of strong ensemble playing where all members of the group were clearly committed to the overall artistic intention of the piece. This was seen in powerful vocal work, dynamic physicality, and the ability to use the performance space to its best effect. Weaker performances were typified by an over-reliance on spoken dialogue, often with all the characters seated. This lent itself to a soap-opera inspired view of dysfunctional families arguing over the dinner table.

Spoken self-evaluation

These were generally of a good standard. There were few examples of candidates reading from a script and the majority showed an enthusiastic engagement with evaluating their practical work. Almost all candidates stayed well within the three-minute maximum.

Scripted piece

Most performances were of the required length and there were many examples of candidates giving careful thought as to how the extract should be cut for its greatest dramatic effect. Less successful performances had little sense of shape or balance with the extract ending at unusual points in the drama.

There were some very strong examples of ensemble performance where each member of the group had contributed fully to the rehearsal process. This was evident through generous performances where each candidate demonstrated awareness of the status of all the actors. By contrast, some pieces were dominated by one or two strong performers whose main concern appeared to be their own performance rather than that of the group.

There were many highly effective physical pieces where the candidates had focused on creating meaning through gesture, expression and use of space. Less effective performances often compromised physicality by focusing heavily on the delivery of lines, which often created the impression that the dialogue had not been fully understood. There were few examples of candidates forgetting lines or drying up.

Most candidates performed in well defined stage-spaces with many pieces being delivered to socially distanced outdoor audiences. This was a real encouragement for the performers and centres took extraordinary care to enable the performances to take place.

Much of the repertoire seen was similar to that presented in the June series and the following list offers a selection of the most frequently presented plays.

Examples of repertoire used in November 2021

Richard Bean	<i>One Man, Two Guvvors</i>
John Cariani	<i>Love Sick</i>
	<i>Almost, Maine</i>
Caryl Churchill	<i>Top Girls</i>
Noël Coward	<i>Blithe Spirit</i>
Martin Crimp	<i>Attempts on her life</i>
Vickie Donoghue	<i>Mudlarks</i>
Dario Fo	<i>Can't Pay Won't Pay</i>
John Gay	<i>The Beggar's Opera</i>
Ben Elton	<i>Popcorn</i>
John Godber	<i>Shakers</i>
Henrik Ibsen	<i>A Doll's House</i>
Ben Jonson	<i>Volpone</i>
Tony Kushner	<i>Angels in America</i>
Arthur Miller	<i>Death of a Salesman</i>
Eugene O'Neill	<i>Long Day's Journey into Night</i>
John Pielmeier	<i>Agnes of God</i>
F. Scott Fitzgerald	<i>Porcelain and Pink</i>
Jean Paul Satre	<i>No Exit</i>
Neil Simon	<i>Brighton Beach</i>
	<i>The Odd Couple</i>
Sophocles	<i>Antigone</i>
Simon Stephens	<i>Punk Rock</i>
Daryl Watson	<i>The Blueberry Hill Accord</i>
Oscar Wilde	<i>An Ideal Husband</i>
Tennessee Williams	<i>A Streetcar named Desire</i>
	<i>The Glass Menagerie</i>

DRAMA

Paper 9482/03
Theatre-making and Performing

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

DRAMA

Paper 9482/04
Theatre in Context

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.