

# DRAMA

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<p><b>Paper 0411/11</b> <b>Written Paper</b></p>
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## Key messages

As mentioned in the 2023 Report, a significant number of candidates extended their answers to **Question 1** and **Question 2** in the space allotted to the following question. This makes it difficult for examiners to review answers in their entirety. Centres are urged to remind candidates that if any response to a question requires extra space, additional writing must be done in a continuation booklet expressly provided for the purpose.

**Note. Because of the nature of the on-line marking system, examiners cannot guarantee that they will be able to see all of a candidate's response if additional material is entered anywhere other than in a continuation booklet.**

Centres are requested to stress to candidates the importance of reading the question carefully. This session saw a number of instances where candidates were unable to receive any credit at all because they did not answer the question on the paper. A far greater number scored no more than half marks because they did not follow the guidance implicit in the question thereby providing 'half answers'. For example, where questions include the instruction 'Make close reference to specific lines from the extract in your answer', candidates need to ensure that they do indeed draw close links between their discussion and specific lines in the text. Very often this instruction was ignored, to the detriment of the answer, since marks could not be awarded above band 4.

## General comments

It was encouraging to see that there were far fewer examples of candidates writing in excess of the amount necessary to address two, three and five mark questions. There were still one or two examples of responses exceeding two pages of writing for questions which had a ceiling of five available marks but on the whole, candidates seem to have adopted a more realistic perspective relating to the length of their answers.

Centres are requested to stress to their candidates the importance of being specific when using technical vocabulary. This means the use of a specific term needs to be given some form of quality in addition to its value. A 'good posture' for example, is not only imprecise, it does not convey a theatrical intention or outcome with sufficient clarity. The term a 'relaxed posture' or an 'aggressive posture' conveys theatrical meaning whereas 'good' or 'bad' does not. A similar situation surrounds the use of gesture. Frequently, candidates state that they would use 'hand gestures' to convey an intention but because there is no definable quality attached, examiners are required to mark this as 'too vague' to receive any credit.

Centres are requested to reiterate to their candidates that this is a syllabus with practical drama and not dramatic literature at its core. There continues to be a tendency for a few candidates to engage in literary analysis when considering a given text, its characters and their motivations and actions. Some answers provided in depth textual and sub-textual analysis of set passages but at the expense of practical applied dramatic outcomes.

## **Comments on specific questions**

### **Section A**

#### **Question 1**

The question requires candidates to specify one physical action to play HILARY for the first mark. The second mark for why this action would be effective, is justified only by the successful access of the first.

The word 'action' invites the candidate to supply a clearly delineated *act* of physicality which seemed to have caused some difficulty for candidates. Responses included 'hand gestures', 'straight posture' 'open/closed body language' 'sitting upright' 'have my legs crossed' none of which constitute a clear physical action' because they are either too vague or essentially passive in nature and not requiring the initiation of any action whatsoever. Another approach noted by examiners was an occasional focus on 'emotions' instead of 'physical action e.g. 'I would play her angry'. All the trends indicated above would prevent candidates from scoring the second dependant mark for the question. However, because this was the very first question on the paper, wherever possible, examiners gave candidates benefit of the doubt.

#### **Question 2**

The question requires the identification of three different physical actions EDWIN could use in this passage to show his relationship with MEG. Most answers opted for appropriate comforting and supportive actions such as patting, stroking, hugging etc. 'Good posture' was not credited. Where a particular look in the eyes was identified in the context of an action this was credited. A few responses specified a vocal response, where 'a slightly strained voice', for example, could not be credited.

#### **Question 3**

There were some sound responses to this question which asked how the candidate would play the role of TROY in Scene Three and Scene Eight. The vast majority of answers provided appropriate practical and applied suggestions whereas only a few tended to follow a literary approach which focused, inappropriately, on the character's inner psychological condition. Some responses simply told the story of the scene(s) which meant that as a purely narrative response they could not score more than a single mark.

#### **Question 4**

The majority of answers were able to provide some valid directorial suggestions for the staging of scene seven to highlight the contrasting relationships. The question asks for a focus on actors and the tensions between the characters, which are to be brought out by gesture, facial expression, non-verbal communication, vocal tones and proxemics etc. Many candidates assumed they were writing from the stance of a director i.e., suggesting that the 'actor would sit, the actor would stand' but did not achieve highly as a result of not making the directing role implicit to the creation of tension within the scene. Some candidates allowed set and lighting to intrude to the detriment of the quality of the response, especially where the technical and design suggestions were totally inappropriate for the naturalistic genre of the text.

#### **Question 5**

This question proved challenging for some. It required candidates to suggest both costume and props for use in scene nine for dramatic effect. Sadly, answers often proffered either one or the other, thereby excluding candidates from achieving marks higher than band 4. Some candidates seemed unsure what constituted costume or a prop and where a grey area existed the deciding factor came down to 'was the item worn or was it used'? For example sunglasses if worn throughout the scene are clearly costume but if they are removed and adjusted, put aside, they may become, momentarily perhaps, a hand prop. Consequently, these same sunglasses if never removed cannot qualify as a prop. Candidates may justify which of the two conditions pertain in their answers but they must be clear about it. The text presented many opportunities for costume (beachwear, hats, wraps, etc.) and props, (books, towels, drinks etc.). Some responses included comments about hair which was inadmissible. In many cases candidates often ignored the 'dramatic effect' part of the question.

### Question 6

This question calls for a directorial approach to staging the luncheon scene and how dramatic tensions could be shown. Weaker candidates talked about using music and lighting to do the work for dramatic tension with many candidates missing out the 'direct' part of the question.

It is imperative that candidates remain aware of the genre of this piece, which is naturalistic. Unless the candidate specifically states that they are going for a change of style in this scene – very ill-advised, but which, under rare circumstances, could be taken into consideration by the examiner – the style of the piece should reflect the naturalistic setting. As a consequence, music (unless justified as being diegetic in nature) and atmospheric soundtracks (again, unless justified in a diegetic context such as in this case, where the ocean might be appropriate), follow spots, sudden dramatic set transformations etc. are all inappropriate and cannot score marks above Band 3.

The genre of the piece is paramount because in this case its naturalistic nature dictates that the tension over a family lunch is defined by the dialogue and the characters themselves and not by any other means unless expressly stated in the script.

### Section B

#### Question 7

This question sought to give opportunities for candidates to consider opportunities for engaging the audience from a directorial/theatrical viewpoint. In some cases, candidates missed the point that this was about exploring practically the potential of the extract, focusing instead on the spectator only, which had the effect of transferring the weight of the answer to concentrate on audience interaction and involvement at the expense of the dramatic content. In many cases answers prefigured those for **Question 8**.

#### Question 8

A minority of candidates opted for this question. Candidates were mostly able to identify the changing attitudes/behaviours of the POET to the OLD WOMAN but found it much more difficult to discuss the performance approaches. The question seeks to obtain the actor's methodological approach and is not asking for a character analysis. Some weaker candidates also thought that the question was asking for the contrast in behaviour between the POET and THE OLD WOMAN rather than the contrast between the Poet's behaviour in successive scenes.

#### Question 9

The majority of candidates opted for this question. A significant number chose to include a labelled sketch or diagram which in some cases improved the quality of the answer significantly.

A number of responses tended to be descriptive in nature with some amounting to little more than a list of elements of set that the audience would see on stage. Several answers got bogged down in lighting at the expense of set design and where this was the case, unless the candidate made a strong case for light as a substitute for a physical set, responses could not score higher than Band 4. Another significant limiting factor was where responses described a set for one scene only, i.e., just the park (most common) or just the ballroom (rare). In these cases marks awarded could not score above Band 4. The best approaches not only made a number of creative suggestions for both settings but also demonstrated an awareness of how one scene could make the transition into the other. These scored the most highly.

### Section C

#### Question 10

Although a number of responses demonstrated a willingness to engage on the basis of either 'space' and/or 'contrast', very few candidates understood the meaning of 'spatial contrasts' or that the term 'build in' meant the processes involved. The focus of the question is on the devising process and the way that spatial contrasts were built into the piece as it was put together. It was expected that candidates would identify how they created spatial contrasts and review how the stages of their devising process were utilised by the group to achieve this. However, because the terminology proved challenging for candidates examiners applied the benefit of doubt where grasp of the concept seemed problematic.

Where examiners could not take such a lenient view, however, was where candidates ignored the requirement of the question which was to focus on the devising and not the performing process. This was very common and regrettably a significant number of candidates could not score more highly than Band 4 because they did not address the required focus.

### **Question 11**

The question requires a conscious evaluation of the effectiveness of specific, applied dramatic skills and techniques in the form of movement and voice whilst focusing on the performance process as opposed to the devising process. This question was answered more successfully although weaker candidates focused on 'proof' of effectiveness rather than practical examples of movement and voice. Examples of audience feedback, such as 'we heard the audience gasp' for example, is not what the question seeks to obtain. The evaluative comment should ensure that it concentrates on the effectiveness of the vocal and physical techniques used, not how the audience may or may not have perceived or appreciated the performance.

In the case of voice, several responses tended to become fixated with a single quality such as volume, or tone or, totally inappropriately, dialogue.

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<p><b>Paper 0411/12</b> <b>Written Paper</b></p>
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## Key messages

To access the full range of marks that are available, it is important for candidates to respond directly and succinctly to the key words in the question. Weaker responses miss the focus of the question and are narrative in style.

Candidates should ensure they read questions carefully, understanding that some questions might be addressing more than one aspect of drama. For example, **Question 5** required candidates to consider how set and stage furniture might be used to create dramatic tension. Some candidates did not explore both, focusing on either set or furniture. Others considered set and furniture but not in relation to dramatic tension.

Valuable time can be lost when candidates provide a lengthy narrative description of their devised piece at the start of their answers in **section C**. Some candidates provide the same narrative response at the start of both **Questions 10** and **11**.

Many candidates addressed **Question 10** from the perspective of the performance and did not recognise the question was seeking to explore the devising process in relation to their development of physical contrast. Typically, candidates who understand the devising process cover aspects including intent, relevant research, sharing of and refining of ideas, drafting of material and practical experimentation leading to a working script or outline of the piece.

Candidates are demonstrating a much-improved understanding of evaluation. This was evident in **Question 11**. The strongest candidates were able to discuss what was and was not successful in their performance, often relating this back to what it was they were trying to achieve in terms of their use of a specific dramatic technique and/or design element. Often such responses are developed further, and candidates offer suggestions as to the reasons why ideas were not successful and explore what they might do differently next time. Less successful responses are overly reliant on feedback from the audience – comments that are rarely explored, analysed or discussed in any detail.

## General comments

The texts were well received by most candidates and stimulated some interesting responses. However, most candidates appeared to find *Sorting out Rachel* more accessible than Hanjo. Candidates were more capable of theatrical playfulness and creativity when considering the earlier questions. Responses in relation to Hanjo were cogent, but more prosaic in terms of theatricality.

Some questions ask candidates to ‘make close reference to specific lines from the extract.’ Other questions might ask candidates to focus their response on a specific section of the extract. Candidates who fail to observe this will not access the mark scheme.

The answer booklet is designed to give candidates an idea of the length of response expected in each question, accepting that size of writing can differ. However, many candidates are using multiple additional answer booklets, writing far too much for questions in **Section A**, and then running out of time for the longer questions in **Section C**.

## **Comments on specific questions**

### **Section A**

#### **Question 1**

There were many similar answers provided, including those who had observed the stage direction in relation to pushing the envelope of money across the table. Unsuccessful responses confused physical action with tone of voice suggesting ways in which lines could be delivered. Some cited sitting or posture without clear changes in it.

#### **Question 2**

A wide range of suggestions were offered covering physical actions, movements and vocal tones. Many candidates responded using bullet points, ensuring their suggestions were succinct. Other candidates provided overly lengthy responses fully explaining the reasons for the suggestions given. This was not asked for in this question and, often, led to candidates losing valuable time that would be better served in later questions.

#### **Question 3**

There were many strong responses that fully demonstrated a good understanding of Rachel. These included a clear understanding of Rachel's teenage angst, her feelings of being misunderstood, and the way Rachel related to the other characters. There were many ideas for different ways in which this could be shown through physical action, tone of voice, proxemics and facial expression. Less successful responses often listed various dramatic techniques but did not support them with any explanation or detail so the suggestions could have applied to any character in any scene. Other weaker responses summarised the scene but did not explore the character.

#### **Question 4**

Many candidates were able to demonstrate their understanding of the extract and showed this by highlighting moments of tension in the scene and providing a range of effective directorial approaches which would communicate the marital tensions to the audience. However, some candidates overlooked the tension, only addressing how they would direct the actors to show the couple's mutual love and support, thus evidencing their lack of understanding of the marital relationship. Some candidates fell into the trap of assuming they were playing one of the characters rather than directing both, and therefore only made suggestions for an approach to one character.

#### **Question 5**

Many candidates were able to identify the multiple demands of this question in discussing set and furniture and analysing how these elements contributed to providing dramatic tension. A small number of candidates failed to attempt the question. Others focused on one aspect, predominantly furniture, and failed to mention set. Some candidates focused on lighting, which was not required by the question.

#### **Question 6**

The strongest responses covered a range of directorial ideas relating to movement and space with a focus on showing the tense relationship between the three characters. Some weaker responses referenced Rachel, even though she did not appear in the section specified. Other responses were narrative and failed to focus on the key words in the question. It was common for candidates to focus on one or two aspects, with limited detail or justification, and only writing a similar amount to the 5-mark questions. Thus, some candidates did not successfully make the leap into extended answers. It was evident that many candidates answered each question in isolation, not acknowledging the context given elsewhere in the extract. In this case, candidates frequently ignored the existing tensions between Julie and Craig and presented them as a united force. A small number of candidates struggled with the meaning of movement and space in performance, concentrating on how to deliver lines vocally to demonstrate the tense relationships.

### Question 7

The strongest responses offered detailed practical understanding with meaningful references to the extract. Some compared each practical suggestion, whilst others addressed Jitsuko's attitude to Hanako before moving onto Yoshio. However, many candidates misread the question and addressed the contrasting attitudes of Hanako, Jitsuko and Yoshio as separate individuals in the script. Some gave a variety of general directorial suggestions without clearly linking them to contrasting attitudes or to specific, relevant lines from the extract.

### Section B

#### Question 8

Candidates who selected this question were able to recognise the status of Jitsuko and were able to chart how, as an actor, they would change pitch, tone and pacing, coupled with posture, movement and facial expression to show how power was held over Hanako. Stronger responses might discuss how the stage directions were interpreted by the actor. Less successful answers simply reiterated the stage directions. Some stronger candidates talked about the use of lighting and shadow, albeit such descriptions were rare. Whilst many candidates described and even explained the power Jitsuko had over Hanako, not all were able to discuss how to show it. Weaker responses failed to recognise Jitsuko's dominance, and many did not reference specific lines, instead offering generalised explanations.

#### Question 9

This question saw some highly creative responses, accompanied by some excellent annotated diagrams to support the points being made. It is acknowledged that some centres have more in the way of technical facilities, but this did not inhibit candidates from tackling this question effectively. Typically, strong responses covered all aspects of set and lighting design, which gave a nod to Noh theatre tradition while modernising the concept. Many candidates enjoyed the opportunity to demonstrate their design knowledge and expertise, although some ideas may have been unworkable in practice. Interestingly some candidates wrote very impressively about Noh history and technical lighting, often using birds as an example, but often did not cover the purpose, intention and impact of the designs equally effectively. Some candidates concentrated on one aspect, usually lighting, and ignored set. Some of the weaker lighting suggestions tend to focus on using many different lighting states, especially colours, to symbolise different emotions that would not be evident to an audience.

### Section C

#### Question 10

Many candidates did not access the full range of marks available because their answers focused on physical contrast in the performance, and the devising process was ignored. A few candidates evidenced their understanding of contrast but were confused about what constitutes a physical contrast. Although such responses were rare, the strongest responses discussed how physical contrast was developed over time, discussing the link to the stimuli, intent, any research that was undertaken, the sharing and refining of ideas, the drafting of material and practical experimentation of their ideas.

#### Question 11

This question provided candidates with a good chance of picking up high marks. The majority of candidates were able to access the question. Where candidates were less effective at evaluation, candidates were able to describe how their devised piece looked and sounded. Stronger responses included effective evaluations, analysing the intent and effect of design choices. There were some excessively long answers and a tendency to include all design elements. Stronger responses focused on two or three design elements and followed them through with effective evaluation, making clear reference to successes, weaker points, and also being able to analyse the difference between dramatic intent and final result.

# DRAMA

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<p><b>Paper 0411/13</b> <b>Written Paper</b></p>
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## Key messages

- Candidates continue to write too much for 2 and 3 mark questions, leaving less time for the questions in **Section B** and **C** which require a more substantial response.
- Candidates need to read the question carefully and to ensure that they are answering the question fully. In some cases, candidates were responding by describing in detail a particular technique or stylistic feature which they would use in a production of the extracts or in their devised pieces, but failed to respond to the part of the question which asked them, for example, to evaluate the effectiveness of that technique or to show how it was developed throughout the devising process. This meant that they could not access the higher bands as they were only responding to half of the question.
- The candidates should identify whether the question is a directing, acting or design question and ensure that they respond accordingly.
- It is important that centres support their candidates by training them to write responses that have evaluative depth, and which illustrate the ideas presented by using practical examples from the extracts and the devised piece.
- It must be reiterated that **Section C** focuses on the evolution and performance of the devised piece. Candidates are required to evaluate the creative development of the piece and to identify what their dramatic intention was and how successful they were in achieving that intention in the final piece.

## General comments

The extracts 'The Big Time' by David Williamson and 'Kantan' by Yukio Mishima both seemed popular, and the strongest responses reflected a good understanding of the extracts. Stronger candidates also recognised the dramatic potential of the extracts in performances.

Additional pages were usually used effectively and mostly for **Section B** and **C** questions. It is worth noting again that some questions, for example the 2 and 3 mark questions, only require shorter responses.

Weaker candidates tended to write narrative responses focused on content rather than why that content was used and to what effect.

Some phrases and terms were misunderstood or ignored by candidates, and this inevitably meant that they had not fully answered the question and therefore could not access the higher marks.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section A**

#### **Question 1**

This question was generally well answered with most candidates able to identify one physical action they would use to play the role of NATE and they were able to state why that action would be appropriate. Some of the best answers were short and concise. Weaker candidates confused physical action with tone of voice and vocal delivery or described emotions and inner motivations that could be used to play the role rather than a physical action. Some candidates stated that they would use body language without outlining what sort of body language.



## Question 2

The question asked candidates to identify three different physical actions CELIA could use in the passage to show her relationship with ROHAN. Candidates could get full marks for bullet pointed answers for identifying very simple but clear physical actions. Some candidates suggested one or two physical actions, not the three that were required. Other candidates spent too long on justifying their suggestions when there were only 3 marks available, requiring three suggestions. A few candidates used additional pages on this question, giving detailed reasons for their suggestions despite that fact that the question did not require a justification.

## Question 3

The question asked how the candidate would play ROLLY to show his mateyness with ROHAN in Scene Five. The word 'mateyness' seemed to be misunderstood by some candidates. Weaker candidates' responses were overly narrative and included basic comments lacking detail, identifying emotions without any further elaboration. The strongest responses gave lots of suggestions, referenced lines from the extract throughout and showed a clear understanding of the relationship between the two characters and the many ways it could be presented through physical action, tone of voice, proxemics and facial expressions.

## Question 4

The question asked how the candidate would direct the actors to show the relationship between ROHAN and CELIA in Scene Three. The weaker candidates fell into the trap of assuming that they were playing one of the characters rather than directing both and therefore only made suggestions for one acting approach for one character. Some candidates wrote about irrelevant elements such as sound and lighting which did not contribute to showing the relationship between the characters.

The strongest candidates put themselves in the role of the director and showed an excellent understanding of directing techniques and how a director has an overall vision for the work. These candidates made mature suggestions of how a relationship can be brought out by a director using the full range of physical action, vocal skills and proxemics. In some cases, strong candidates referred to how stagecraft and production techniques can support the scene to enhance an audience's understanding of the relationship whilst still staying focused on the actor's role within the director's overall concept and how, as the director, they would support the actors in presenting the relationship between CELIA and ROHAN.

## Question 5

This seemed to be a very challenging question for most candidates with some only focusing on one aspect, predominantly stage furniture, and neglecting to talk about the set at all despite the question asking how candidates would use **both** set and stage furniture for dramatic tension in the scene.

Some candidates focused on lighting and some credit was given if the lighting was discussed in terms of its effect on the set or stage furniture but no credit was awarded when lighting was discussed in isolation.

Some candidates were able to write about the set and stage furniture but were unable to make a connection between those elements and the creation of dramatic tension in the scene.

Examiners felt that the strongest candidates led with a vision for the whole set which allowed the reader to visualise the set and these candidates then showed how the actors interacted with the set and stage furniture to create dramatic tension. Many strong candidates mentioned how the use of the set and stage furniture might affect proxemics to create dramatic tension.

## Question 6

This question asked candidates to adopt a directorial approach and to show how they would direct Scene Sixteen, Scene Seventeen and Scene Eighteen to achieve dramatic impact. Weaker candidates tended to focus on one or two aspects and gave limited detail or justification for their directorial ideas, often writing a few lines as they did for the questions carrying the fewest marks. Weaker candidates' responses were narrative in approach and the final part of the question relating to dramatic impact was often lost and ended up being implied rather than made explicit. Some candidates did not achieve the higher marks as it was not made clear that the candidate was adopting the role of the director.

The best responses looked at the scenes in a holistic way and explored the actors' performances and how they reflected the relationships within the scenes, as well as identifying blocking, set, props, costume, sound,

lighting, dramatic intention and impact on the audience as a means to achieve dramatic tension. These responses reflected a clear understanding of the dramatic potential of the scenes and were also able to identify the importance of the transitions between the scenes.

## **Section B**

### **Question 7**

The question asked how the candidates would direct the extract to bring out its dream-like qualities. Although some candidates struggled to connect with the idea of what a dream feels or looks like, even the weaker candidates seemed to engage well with this question, and many achieved much better marks for this question than for other questions.

The question required a lot of creativity and imagination and all candidates across the ability range engaged well with this question. Strong answers referenced lines in the text throughout their responses. They also commented on how the ideas would make the audience feel. Outstanding answers referred to Noh Theatre and other culturally traditional theatrical styles. The best answers were able to maintain the directorial approach and to clearly show how they would use the actors' skills and design elements such as lights, staging, effects and costume as well as the dream chorus to convey the dream atmosphere.

The examiners commented that the range of ideas offered were often exciting, innovative and creative, evoking a strong sense of how to convey the dream atmosphere.

### **Question 8**

The question asked candidates to imagine that they were playing the role of Jiro and to show how they would present his change from an arrogant position to better human behaviour. The term 'better human behaviour' was sometimes misinterpreted, and this meant that the weaker candidates tended to focus on the word 'arrogance' and did not chart Jiro's progression and growth. Such responses tended to focus more on how they would portray the arrogance rather than how they, as the actor, would let the character develop and change for the better.

Excellent responses were detailed and used correct acting terminology to describe how they would portray Jiro's change in behaviour, and they were able to chart this journey by highlighting changes in tone, pitch and pacing as well as posture, movement, facial expressions, gesture and attitude.

### **Question 9**

This was the more popular of the choice questions. This question asked the candidates how they would use design elements to convey the atmosphere of the dream sequence in the extract. In **Question 7** the focus is on directorial approach, in **Question 9** the focus is on design. The dream sequence is full of extraordinary design opportunities and candidates had free rein to fully use their imaginations to show how they would present the dream sequence.

Some candidates ignored the part of the question which asked them to make close reference to specific lines from the extract and did not reference the extract at all so their responses were generalised and simplistic.

Strong responses drew on a range of design elements, and many had a clear understanding of Noh Theatre and its symbolic qualities and were able to use that knowledge within their designs. Candidates who performed best were able to make their ideas specific by identifying moments within the text and using them to illustrate their points. Strong candidates offered a range of different design possibilities.

## **Section C**

### **Question 10**

This question was in two parts and candidates needed to understand that the process they went through was as important as the vocal contrasts being discussed. Many candidates chose to do one without the other and this limited them in terms of the mark that they were able to achieve. Weaker candidates talked about vocal contrasts and were able to identify how different tones of voice, pitch, pace etc. were used, but only in the final piece with no reference at all to the process of devising.

Stronger candidates were able to discuss techniques used throughout the devising process that helped them to develop vocal contrasts. There were some excellent accounts of different exercises used in workshop situations and how rehearsal techniques such as hot seating, research, improvising, forum theatre, class feedback, role on the wall, emotional memory exercises and self-evaluation through filming themselves, were all used to build the final piece. These candidates were then able to identify how that devising work was reflected in the vocal contrasts used in the devised piece.

### **Question 11**

This question asked the candidates to evaluate the effectiveness of character interaction in the performance of the devised piece, making close reference to the performance of the piece to support the evaluation. Weaker candidates described the interactions between characters with little or no evaluation of the effectiveness of those interactions. Candidates who had performed in pieces with little or no interaction with other characters struggled to answer this question and often ignored the question. There was some confusion regarding what 'character interaction' meant and some candidates misinterpreted it as meaning how the group of performers interacted with the audience or how successful the relationships were between characters in performance.

Stronger candidates described the interactions that took place and then presented a detailed reflection on their own work and used feedback from the audience to assess the level of effectiveness of the character interaction in the piece. These candidates were able to discuss at length the different character interactions in their devised piece and then support this using some extensive evaluative commentary. These responses included clear reference to successes and an identification of the weaknesses in the piece. They were able to analyse the difference between dramatic intent and the final result.

# DRAMA

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<p><b>Paper 0411/02</b> <b>Coursework</b></p>
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## Key messages

- 1 A fundamental teaching point for monologues is to ask: 'who are you speaking to?' Candidates need to be clear about that, whether it be a person on stage or the audience.
- 2 In group performances, the most important thing is that the candidate is suited to the role they are going to play and that this role allows them to demonstrate their skills to best effect. There should be no such thing as a 'big part' in an exam piece – everyone needs to have opportunity to show their best work.
- 3 Devised work needs to be authentic and consistent, with interesting and varied characters who live, breathe, interact and feel emotion. This is no place for table-and-chairs drama, where nothing much happens, or the characters lack credibility.

## **Administration**

Moderators were grateful to centres for the considerable time and effort that had gone into the thorough marking of candidates' work. Most submissions were very well organised and the Internal Candidate Mark Sheet (ICMS) contained detailed, personalised comments that fully justified the marks awarded. Most ICMS forms were completed in detail with excellent justifications and personalised comments regarding the individual candidate's performance. In fact, some ICMS forms offered so much detail that they overflowed the boxes, which was not required.

However, there was a significant minority of centres where the moderation submission was very poorly organised and offered scant level of detail about any aspect of the work. The ICMS forms contained minimal detail as to what the candidates were performing, why marks had been awarded and – in some cases – contained arithmetical errors. In such instances, where anything at all had been written, ICMS forms and comments were generic reiterations of the assessment criteria that did not relate to an individual candidate's performance. Occasionally, the same or similar comments were included on the ICMS forms for a number of candidates, suggesting that the comments had been cut and pasted between documents. These were of very limited help to the Moderator. Centres are reminded that the ICMS forms are the key documents relied upon by the Moderator to understand the centre's rationale in awarding marks.

Centres are also reminded of the requirement to upload the ICMS forms for all candidates as some centres wrongly uploaded only the forms for those in the sample. A small number of centres wrongly uploaded the ICMS forms as separate PDFs, which is very unhelpful to the moderation process as each form would need to be downloaded individually. Centres are reminded that all ICMS forms should be uploaded as **a single pdf file** on Submit for Assessment. Finally, centres are reminded of the need to ensure that the marks on each ICMS form are correctly totalled up and then transferred accurately into Submit for Assessment.

Almost all centres submitted the correct sample of work on Submit for Assessment. There were occasional issues when centres failed to submit the top and bottom candidate or failed to present a spread of marks in their sample. It is essential that both the highest and lowest-marked candidate are included in the sample.

Some centres did not upload the DVD cover sheet, which delayed the process as Moderators had to work out which candidates were in each piece.

## *Recordings*

The quality of sound and picture is vital to ensuring the moderation process runs smoothly. There were many excellent recordings, where the centre had taken time to ensure that the filming was well done, and where the end result was appropriate for the Moderator to see and hear all aspects of the performance.

There were, however, many recordings that did not do justice to candidates' performances. The camera was often placed so far away from the performance that the sound quality was faint and/or the image quality blurred. In other instances, the camera operator had attempted to follow the action by moving the camera angle to follow candidates and/or zooming in and out. This was generally unhelpful and in extreme instances imbued the resulting video with a slightly wild quality, which was not helpful to understanding the nature of the performance. In other instances, the microphone was placed a very long way from the performance space, which meant that the sound quality was poor, often exacerbated when the performance space was large and echoey.

Most videos were uploaded in standard, easily playable formats. Some, however, were not uploaded as video files, but in entirely different formats that proved unplayable, thus causing a delay in the process while the centre created another file in a standard format.

#### *Candidate identification*

Moderators drew attention to the varying quality of **candidate identification**. It should be noted that every candidate is required to identify themselves before each of their three pieces. Notes on the ICMS forms such as 'fourth to enter' or 'second to sit on the left' were of little help. Even where candidates identified themselves to camera in the line-up at the start, it was often difficult to catch their names as so many rushed through in a rather embarrassed fashion. There is an expectation in a drama assessment that candidates are able to deliver their name and candidate number clearly, accurately and without embarrassment. It is also essential that when they announce their names, they are dressed in whatever costume they will be wearing in the performance itself.

#### *Quality of marking*

The majority of centres awarded marks in accordance with the assessment criteria in the syllabus and were therefore closely in line with the Cambridge standard.

Where Moderators made scaling recommendations, it was most often because AO3 (Performance Skills) had been overmarked across all three pieces. However, there were many examples of considerable overmarking in AO2, devising original drama. There was a tendency to reward candidates for effort and attendance rather than their contribution to the devising process. It should be noted, though, that simply turning up is not worthy of marks.

#### *Use of performance space*

Most pieces were staged in school halls, studios or large classrooms and were usually performed to a small audience, such as the candidates' peers or an invited audience. Very few performances had no audiences. There were a few that were filmed on mobile phones and appeared to have been recorded in people's houses rather than in the school; this was not good practice.

#### *Use of music in performances*

There was some eccentric use of backing track music by a number of centres where music was played throughout all of the performances as a kind of cinematic soundtrack, often of a style that was at odds with the performance itself. This did not enhance the performances, nor did it add to the atmosphere of those performances. More often than not, it meant that performers were fighting to be heard over the music when their performances would easily have been strong enough to be performed without the backing track. Film soundtracks are created specifically for a film to enhance the emotional impact and the use of backing tracks for IGCSE Drama is inappropriate as it not only affects acting skills but also dilutes the impact of any sound effects which need to be there to enhance the piece. Candidates need to give thought to their use of music during pieces, both diegetic and non-diegetic, and need to decide their purpose in using music at all.

#### *Length of pieces*

Centres adhered to the time requirements well and it was rare for candidates to present overly short/long performances. However, centres are reminded that on the very rare occasion this does occur, it disadvantages candidates as it seldom gives each candidate the focus or exposure required.

### **Scripted Pieces: Individual Pieces**

Moderators reported that the standard of individual performance work was high and there was a commendable level of acting skills and communication on display. Strong candidates had prepared thoroughly, taken account of stage space, characteristics, relationships with others and the fact that an audience was present. Such candidates delivered performances that were totally engaging and convincing but even the weakest candidates often performed with discipline and focus. Breakdowns were very rare and the worst that could be said is that the weakest performances were lifeless and lacked differentiation.

Most centres proved adept at choosing scripted material with care to suit their candidates' individual abilities and interests, while continuing to stretch and challenge. There were some excellent examples of centres where teachers had really considered the relevance of the chosen texts to their candidates, and it was evident that the candidates were invested in these texts. Although there was a considerable amount of (for example) William Shakespeare, John Godber and Evan Placey, there was also evidence of centres selecting performance texts that were both culturally relevant to their own country and that were also challenging and innovative.

The strongest candidates focused on their performance, rather than props and set. There were several monologues, however, which suffered from over-reliance on furniture, with the candidate being rooted to a desk and chair and (often) mumbling to camera. In the weakest monologues, candidates even gave the impression of having the script on the table in front of them. Those who performed from behind a table or a settee, a pile of clothes or shopping or similar, made their tasks of relating to an audience much harder. Some performers used other candidates as silent partners on stage for their monologues. This was helpful as it provided a focus for addressing comments or asking questions and showed an understanding of the performer's relationship with the audience.

A few candidates had chosen – wrongly – to present the same individual text and the same group scripted text for all their candidates, which did not allow candidates the opportunity to tackle a range of styles and texts and created an unnecessary and unhelpful comparison between candidates. The 2024 syllabus states explicitly that 'candidates should not perform material taken from the same play for both their individual and group performances' (p.18). Centres are reminded to advise candidates of this and prevent it from occurring in future sessions.

### **Scripted Pieces: Group Pieces**

To some extent, the comments on individual pieces relating to choice of texts apply equal well to the group scripted performances.

Centres often selected texts from the annual list included in the Principal Examiner's Report. The best performances came where there had been thorough research and preparation, including stylistic approaches from key practitioners and consideration of the contexts of the plays.

Most candidates were comfortable with the group scripted pieces and there were some excellent examples of good work with natural rapport between the performers and an excellent flow to the piece. Although there was a range of success in performance terms, in most pieces there was a good understanding of the art of acting and effective use of techniques such as vocals, physicality, gesture and communication with an audience. The strengths and weaknesses of individual candidate's acting skills did not vary greatly from those seen in their individual performances. However, the impact of performing as an ensemble was a key differentiator. Candidates who delivered a strong individual performance sometimes struggled to understand the changing dynamics of an ensemble or they did not know what to do when they had no lines.

Few groups dressed in appropriate and relevant costumes. While it was not specifically required, it was effective when used and added a sense of period, status and context to performances. Dressing in a school uniform (unless required by the text) is **not** appropriate and does not help the candidate portray their character effectively.

### **Devised pieces**

The quality of devised work continues to improve each session and there were far fewer melodrama/soap style pieces than in previous years although there were many mid-band dystopian, post-apocalyptic pieces and a smattering of pieces about post-pandemic life.

The strongest pieces were where candidates had chosen an issue/theme or story which they were totally interested in and created innovative pieces which fully showcased styles, practitioners and techniques which they had explored during their course. This work reflected what had been studied throughout the course in terms of different practitioners and different theatrical styles. The pieces were often innovative, creative and exciting with sound, movement, physicality and judicious use of appropriate props/effects and pushing at boundaries of expression. The more Physical Theatre and abstract work, showed a real consideration of the performance imagery candidates were presenting and sought to engage the audience fully.

Weaker examples tend to be naturalistic examples where there is no sense of 'character' or of shape of the piece. This type of work was often predictable and, in most cases, very narrative, tending to spell out every detail of the plot. At its worst, this approach looked more like a workshop or classroom lesson than a piece of drama for the stage.

A number of features emerged as typical of weaker pieces. There were several examples of over-wordy pieces, mini soap operas, and hackneyed scenarios. In such cases, scenes sometimes needed editing, either because they were too long or too short. Over-use of entrances and exits with or without blackouts served no useful purpose. The handling of phones or cups of drinks was poor, and in the weakest work the performers were often rooted to the chairs around the table.

### IGCSE Coursework texts 2024

The following performance texts provide examples of what was seen by Moderators in the June 2024. They are provided for information and there is no requirement for centres to use any of them for their own work, although they may consider these if they wish.

<b>Playwright</b>	<b>Play</b>
Alan Ayckbourn	<i>A Walk in the Park</i> <i>Invisible Friends</i>
Aeschylus	<i>Agamemnon</i> <i>The Watchman</i>
Edward Albee	<i>Zoo story</i>
Richard Bean	<i>One Man Two Gov'nors</i>
Samuel Beckett	<i>Waiting for Godot</i>
Steven Berkoff	<i>Metamorphosis</i>
Edward Bond	<i>The Sea</i>
Andrew Bovell	<i>Things I know to be True</i>
Jim Cartwright	<i>Road</i>
Anton Chekhov	<i>The Cherry Orchard</i>
Caryl Churchill	<i>Cloud Nine</i> <i>Top Girls</i>
Gabriel Davis	<i>Goodbye Charles</i>
Christopher Durang	<i>Baby with the bathwater</i>
Euripides	<i>Hecuba</i> <i>Medea</i>
Dario Fo	<i>Accidental Death of an Anarchist</i>
John Godber	<i>Bouncers</i> <i>Shakers</i> <i>Teechers</i>
Henrik Ibsen	<i>A Doll's House</i>
Debbie Isitt	<i>The Woman who cooked her husband</i>
Charlotte Keatley	<i>My mother said I never should</i>
Dennis Kelly	<i>DNA</i>
Neil Labute	<i>The Shape of Things</i>
C S Lewis	<i>Voyage of the Dawn Treader</i>
Martin McDonagh	<i>The Pillow Man</i>
Sharman McDonald	<i>After Juliet</i>
Arthur Miller	<i>All My Sons</i> <i>Death of a Salesman</i> <i>The Crucible</i>
John Osborne	<i>Look Back in Anger</i>

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Harold Pinter	<i>The Birthday Party</i> <i>The Caretaker</i> <i>The Homecoming</i>
Mark Ravenhill	<i>Pool No Water</i>
Yasmina Reza	<i>Art</i>
Philip Ridley	<i>Karamazoo</i>
Peter Shaffer	<i>Amadeus</i>
William Shakespeare	<i>Hamlet</i> <i>Henry V</i> <i>Merchant of Venice</i> <i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i> <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
Neil Simon	<i>Brighton Beach</i> <i>Rumours</i> <i>The Odd Couple</i>
Gordon Steele	<i>Like a Virgin</i>
John Steinbeck	<i>Of Mice and Men</i>
Simon Stephens	<i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</i>
Shelagh Stephenson	<i>Five Kinds of Silence</i> <i>The Memory of Water</i>
Timberlake Wertenbaker	<i>Our Country's Good</i>
Debbie Tucker Green	<i>Random</i>
Enda Walsh	<i>Chatroom</i>
Oscar Wilde	<i>Importance of Being Earnest</i> <i>Salome</i> <i>The Ideal Husband</i>
Nigel Williams	<i>Lord of the Flies</i>
August Wilson	<i>Fences</i>
Lanford Wilson	<i>Brontosaurus</i>