

CCEA GCSE - Drama
Summer Series 2016

Chief Examiner's and Principal Moderator's Report

drama

Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of CCEA's General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in Drama for this series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's microsite on our website at www.ccea.org.uk

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GCSE DRAMA

Chief Examiner Report

Paper 1 Understanding Drama

General

Candidates responded very well to this year's paper and the quality of the answers reflected the hard work and dedication of the teachers and the learning and application of the students. All candidates were well prepared to answer all the questions. It was clear this year that many centres had concentrated on Question 2, as the quality of responses was generally improved and answers were generally well-structured with some very creative, detailed and thoughtful answers. However, in many cases, so much time was spent on Question 2 that Questions 1 and 3(a), which are regarded as relatively easy to achieve higher marks, were less well answered this year and some candidates appeared to give less time, attention and detail to their answers.

There were new centres this year who had received support and this was apparent in the overall quality of answering as more candidates were able to answer all questions with and fewer 'limited responses'.

Overall, candidates' responses showed a high level of engagement with their set texts and with the scripted texts which they had performed.

Comments on individual questions

Q1 Answers to this question were generally of a high standard with well annotated sketches which referred to the period, status, colour, shape and material. However many candidates are omitting an appropriate quotation with comment which should be appropriate to the context requested for the costume. Some candidates add a 'floating' quotation which was not linked to the character or the costume and some candidates are not reading the specific costume location. In *Blood Brothers*, for example, many candidates used a costume for Linda at home in Act 2, rather than 'when she visits Mickey in prison', as requested and the quotation should be taken from this scene. It was similar for Tituba, 'at the end of Act 1' and for Boyle 'at the end of the play'.

Q2 All candidates were able to answer this question and indeed there were many very comprehensive, creative and well-structured answers this year. Most candidates are very clear about 'a chosen moment' which could be a short phrase or a line or two. One centre very successfully referred to a 'reaction' moment, where the character was challenged in how to react to a line of text from another character. However, some centres are interpreting 'a chosen moment' as a page and as much as four pages of text which is not acceptable and some centres are choosing a number of moments which is also not acceptable as the question clearly requests 'a chosen moment' and 'a different moment'. Some candidates are giving too much time to the performance of the rehearsal work which is not required. This is a rehearsal question, so much of the answer should be spent on the improvisation detail or other appropriate rehearsal idea.

Development work should be of similar length for both ideas as they are equally marked. Some candidates' are giving very brief improvisation detail and script and very sketchy thought tracking or conscience alley ideas and many of these centres are spending an unbalanced amount of time on application which is not justified. Many candidates are choosing a specific moment of text and then referring to a different moment in their application and some candidates are omitting to refer to 'how each rehearsal idea would

help to develop different aspects of your character's performance style'. Also some candidates' answers are unbalanced as they are using a relatively short rehearsal idea to develop an amazing amount of performance detail. The top answers had some very imaginative and highly relevant rehearsal ideas, especially through improvisation and hot seating. Some ideas give less opportunity and scope for development. The best answers also clearly demonstrated how the actor had benefited significantly with improved vocal or movement skills or facial expressions and is now more secure and confident in playing the role. A monologue is not an improvisation. Some candidates are writing script which is too similar to the original play script.

- Q3 (a)** A lot of good teaching was apparent from these answers and many candidates succinctly referred to background research, style of acting, staging and appropriate information about the playwright. Such information needs to be clear, precise and brief as candidates have only 10 minutes to answer the question. Some candidates are writing a summary of the play and the part they played in the performance which is not required and some are giving an inordinate amount of information about the playwright. In the top band answers, candidates were able to give a brief understanding of their style of performance and a brief sketch of their staging. This answer needs to inform the examiner about the candidate's specific performance of their scripted performance.
- Q3 (b)** This question was generally well answered although there is still an issue about 'multi-role' performances as some candidates referred to playing more than one role. Most candidates were able to refer to some aspects of voice in performance and the best answers referred to very clear and specific aspects of vocal work by including elements of pitch, pace, use of pause, use of emphasis, inflexion, tone quality, colour and amount. Top band candidates were also able to analyse what they had achieved by using their voice in a particular way. Some candidates spent too much time, in describing their character and the story of the play or being descriptive and repetitive about using their voice in performance. Some candidates said that their voice was 'condescending', 'sarcastic' or 'angry', without giving any specific detail.

Readability of the Paper

The language of the paper was acceptable for the full ability range.

Mark Schemes

Mark schemes were clear and straightforward and key words ensured that the examiner was able to quickly identify strengths and weaknesses of the candidate and allocate marks accordingly.

Time Allowance

The time allowed is sufficient to allow candidates to complete the paper and it is always surprising that so many candidates can write so much in this relatively short space of time. For many candidates it is not difficult for them to be able to achieve 'detailed' and 'comprehensive' responses. Candidates are constantly advised to answer the paper in the order it is written and it would appear that there were fewer centres changing the order of answering which works in their favour.

Principal Moderator's Report

Paper 2 Drama Performance

The team of moderators were generally impressed with the moderation process this year and would like to offer their congratulations to this year's pupils and teachers.

Overall standards at moderation were good and there was evidence of thorough preparation in terms of the appropriate selection of material and research for the chosen scripts. Performances and appraisals were also well prepared and candidates were fully engaged in the process at nearly all centres. The positive pupil teacher relationships experienced at centres continued to be noteworthy and indicated clearly the importance of the subject in supporting a range of skills including "working with others."

Assessment criteria were applied appropriately, for the most part, although there were more centre adjustments this year than in any previous year of this current specification. Six centres were adjusted overall, however, only two centres were adjusted for lenient marking.

The variety of texts explored was extensive with a broad range of style and genre represented in the creative choices of centres. The range included texts from the classics of Oscar Wilde to the more contemporary choices currently on offer. There were at least 19 texts presented for the first time this year and around 80 texts in total explored for the Scripted Performance. Centres are to be reminded that texts must be of a published nature, which means that unsourced internet material and screenplays are not acceptable.

The most popular choices this year were: *Blue Remembered Hills*, *Joyriders*, *Steel Magnolias*, *Cagebirds* and *Sparkleshark*. Some very strong candidates rose to the challenge presented by the more thought-provoking texts, however, such texts did not always prove advantageous for less able candidates.

Assessment

In general, the assessment criteria for Assessment Objective 2 and Assessment Objective 3 are being applied accurately at the majority of centres. It was noted, however, in a significant minority of centres that marking tended to be lenient but within tolerance, particularly at the top end. When marking beyond tolerance occurred on the day of moderation, the appropriate adjustments were made at the post moderation meeting. This beyond tolerance marking applied to the top range of marks which had been awarded to performances or appraisals which were not of this standard. It should be noted that marking in this range should be awarded as a result of the evidence of accomplished work.

There is also a growing tendency to award full marks for Assessment Objective 1; it was noted by moderators that this level of achievement was not always reflected in the outcomes for Assessment Objective 2 and Assessment Objective 3. Assessment outcomes for Assessment Objective 1 should correspond with those of Assessment Objective 2 and Assessment Objective 3.

Marking on the day of external moderation must reflect the marks awarded at internal standardisation. Adjustments may be considered if this is not the case.

The notification of adjustment is indicated in the TAC6 report and centres should take note of issues identified. It is the expectation of the moderation team that these issues will be addressed by the relevant centres for next year's moderation.

Administration

Administration was completed accurately in nearly all centres which enabled the process of moderation to run smoothly. Paperwork was completed to a good standard and in a few centres the level of detail proved to be exemplary once again.

Generally, the venues and performance spaces were suited to the process of moderation, however, there were a few interruptions this year during appraisal. Disruption should be avoided through the provision of a space where the candidates can appraise without interruption.

Moderators welcomed the time afforded to them before the performances began for the perusal of the documentation. This enabled the moderators to familiarise themselves with the work of the candidates. It should be noted that an adequate amount of time must be allocated to the moderator for the inspection of documentation and to the process of finalising marks.

Candidate Notebooks

Evidence of engagement in units of coursework is contained in the candidate notebooks which are required to be completed for all candidates and for all units.

Candidates are expected to show evidence in their notebook of their research in terms of the style and period of their performances. It is also a requirement to include a discrete section for each of the two units of coursework. Some notebooks were presented in the style of a working journal; if this is the case, it is important that the sections relevant to the Assessment Objectives are indicated clearly as there is a limited amount of time available for the inspection of the work. Notebooks must be complete and must contain evidence of preparation, research and evaluation. A considerable number of notebooks failed to meet these requirements.

There were less issues this year with missing notebooks, however, there were still problems in a small number of centres. These centres were requested to forward missing notebooks to CCEA for inspection by the senior team at post moderation.

Standard of Presentations

Once again the drama performances were generally of a good standard with some very good, excellent and accomplished work in evidence.

Most of the texts proved suitable and some new texts presented interesting challenges for able candidates. Some centres presented a great contrast in the material selected for their different groups and offered performances which were thought-provoking and of a high standard. Staging was used effectively to enhance performances at a significant number of centres, including the creative use of: set, costume, props, music and lighting. Moderators commented that supportive audiences added to the sense of occasion.

The candidates in general were well engaged and there was very little evidence of under prepared performances. There were no issues identified this year in terms of work which was too short but there were several centres again this year who presented overlong work. The guidelines state thirty minutes for a maximum group of nine and it was noted that candidates were disadvantaged when the presentations were overly long.

In most centres the full range of marks was in evidence but there were several instances again this year where the bottom candidates were not seen on the day of moderation. If the bottom candidate is not available for moderation, then the visiting moderator must be informed prior to the visit. It should also be noted that non-examination students are not permitted to perform for an absent candidate unless prior permission has been sought from CCEA. There should also be no other roles allocated to non-examination students.

In the majority of centres, internal standardisation had been effectively carried out but this was

not always the case and centres are to be reminded that adjustments are applied to all candidates. There were also several cases this year when more than one teacher had planned to be involved in the appraisal and assessment process of a single group. Centres should be reminded that each group should only be assessed and appraised by their own teacher and the visiting moderator on the day of external moderation.

It was still apparent that some teachers are not attending the Agreement Trial; it should be noted that it is the expectation of CCEA that teachers undertaking the assessment of this specification attend this autumn event.

Appraisal

The moderators continue to be impressed by the standard of appraisal and some of the candidates' responses were described as "impressive", "insightful" or "intuitive." In the main, pupils were very engaged in this process and it was also apparent that teachers are now very skilled at leading these sessions. Effective links were made to information contained in the candidate notebooks and ideas expressed in appraisal generally conveyed understanding. Teachers in the main are now questioning candidates on research and their rehearsal process; these are compulsory aspects in assessment of Assessment Objective 3. It should be noted that all candidates should have an equal opportunity to respond in appraisal and that questions should be directed fairly to candidates across the ability range.

Appraisals were more realistically assessed this year with less tendency to mark candidates in Mark Band 4. Responses, however, still tend to be narrative rather than expressive of evaluative conclusions. There were a number of candidates awarded top marks by teachers on the day of moderation who did not express their ideas with insight or convey aspects of analytical thinking. Centres must ensure that appraisals take place in a quiet space to enable candidates, teachers and moderators to focus on this important process.

Problem Areas

Difficulties experienced this year were again relatively few and this was due to the hard work and dedication of the teachers involved in the delivery of the specification. Centres should, however, note the following:

Marking on the day should reflect internal standardisation.

- The length of the presentation must be in line with requirements.
- The process of performance and appraisal should be uninterrupted.
- Groups should be comprised of the required number of candidates.
- The bottom candidate must form part of the sample at external moderation.

Well done to all who participated so successfully in the 2016 series of GCSE Drama.

Contact details

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