

CCEA GCSE - Drama
Summer Series 2017

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.

Contents

Paper 1	Understanding Drama	3
Paper 2	Drama Performance	5
Contact details		8

GCSE DRAMA

Chief Examiner's Report

Paper 1 Understanding Drama

General

This was the first year for the written paper to be marked online. The majority of papers had been scanned successfully and some which were unable to be scanned were marked as hard copies.

In general, candidates responded well to the examination and once again it was evident that they had been well prepared to answer all questions, with most candidates attempting all questions. Responses showed a high level of engagement with the set text and some interesting and highly appropriate chosen texts for the performance questions with everything from 'The Twits' to Pinter's 'The Birthday Party'. A few candidates had unfortunately chosen their set text for Question 3 and as this was a breach of rubric, received no marks.

The majority of candidates answered the paper in the order of the questions which was a distinct advantage for timing and content and many more candidates added more information at the end of the paper for specific questions. Candidates seem to be writing more every year and using additional booklets.

It was obvious this year that teachers had spent a lot of time on Question 2 as many more candidates received full marks which is half the total marks for the paper. Candidates had generally a much better structure to this question and there was more understanding of a 'chosen moment' and application to the text. However, Question 1 seemed to suffer a little as a result and the justification was sometimes lacking in detail and missing the context of the scene and the quotation with comment which is required for a top band answer, was sometimes omitted. Question 3(a) was well answered and although this year 'facial expression' was set for Question 3(b), candidates had included a full range of performance detail and text references.

Once again *Blood Brothers* was the most popular text with *The Crucible*, *Juno and the Paycock* and *Philadelphia, Here I Come* being well supported and also now some centres using *Across the Barricades*.

Comments on individual questions

Q1 All candidates attempted this question. It was generally answered well but perhaps fewer candidates received full marks. Sketches were clear and in general annotated appropriately. Some very good drawings appeared this year but please remember that a 'stick-man' drawing can just as easily receive full marks. Colour, shape and material were generally well referenced but some had not included the status or period. Fewer candidates had included justification on the sketch but overall the justification was less specific and did not refer to the context of the scene as, for example, Edward is 'at home' after he was 'suspended from school' for wearing a locket and swearing at the teacher and Juno 'enters hastily' and 'puts her coat and hat on the bed' at the end of Act 1. This kind of information has a direct bearing on the costume. A top band answer in this question requires the candidate to be 'perceptive' in response and also add comment to a quotation from the scene. This could have been a reference to 'the locket' for Edward or a hat and coat for Juno. Quite a few candidates omitted a quotation and weaker candidates had very limited justification but quite a lot of description and quite sometimes the sketch and quotation were not from the appropriate scene.

Q2 All candidates attempted this question and in the main it was answered well. There were some excellent answers with very coherent and comprehensive detail. However, a significant number of candidates did not identify a chosen moment, or gave any reasoning why they had chosen this particular moment or how each rehearsal idea would help to develop different aspects of the character's performance style. Many candidates referred to a different moment in performance from the one that they had originally chosen which was surprising and certainly lost them marks. Some candidates referred to a scene or an extremely lengthy extract of text rather than a chosen moment and wrote about several text moments rather than one chosen moment for each idea. It is important to point out that the chosen moment and text, which had been a challenge for the candidate to perform, must be the same moment in the application. Some candidates directed the rehearsal work which is not required. For example, some candidates using Hot Seating, described their performance skills when delivering the questions and answers. Only the chosen moment needs to be directed effectively and with improvement as a result of the rehearsal work. 'I had to use a gender switch' or 'I found it difficult to play', are not appropriate challenges. Some candidates did not refer to two 'contrasting' moments.

Rehearsal ideas varied greatly in both content and length and some candidates used script which was very close to the original text. Some candidates used 'good angel/bad angel', 'forum theatre', voice or video work and 'magic if' as their second rehearsal idea but most used 'hot seating or a form of 'thought tracking' which all worked well. The second rehearsal idea needs to be comparable with improvisation in quality and length as it carries equal marks. A small number of candidates referred to a number of rehearsal ideas and a few developed two improvisations. A monologue or soliloquy is not an improvisation but may be used as a second idea.

- Q3** (a) This question was generally very well answered; however, many candidates gave too much detail and description about the play, the story, and their performance. Many candidates had clearly done a lot of research. Some candidates wrote about their rehearsal work rather than the performance. Four main aspects needed to be identified to receive top band marks. Some candidates referred to using 'a Stanislavski' or a 'Brecht' or 'Bruiser' style without any understanding or explanation. Terms such as 'stylised', 'surreal' or 'non-naturalistic' needed some detail.
- (b) There were some very impressive answers to this question with a full range of facial expressions being explored in performance with appropriate text support and clear references to intended audience response. Some candidates had cleverly used text from other characters or moments of silence and no text being spoken so that they could re-act using facial expressions. Centres should be reminded that candidates should use texts which give them an opportunity to fully engage with ONE role as the question requires. Responses from weaker candidates were often quite vague, descriptive and repetitive in their facial expressions and referred to a 'dull', 'worried', 'sarcastic' or 'surprised' expression without any detail. These answers generally had also limited reference to text. Some candidates referred only to key moments and made only general reference to facial expression while describing their character in performance.

The time allowed seemed sufficient to allow all candidates to complete all questions and candidates are to be congratulated for the amount they write in the given time. The majority of candidates had a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of their set text and the standard of written communication was very good.

Principal Moderator's Report

Paper 2 Drama Performance

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

Overall standards at moderation were generally good with evidence of thorough preparation at some very strong centres. Time had been afforded to the appropriate selection of material and research for the chosen scripts at these excellent centres. Performances and appraisals were also well prepared for the most part and candidates were thoroughly engaged in the process at nearly all centres. The positive pupil teacher relationships continued to be noteworthy and this was an aspect specifically mentioned in the reports of several moderators.

Assessment criteria were applied appropriately, for the most part, and there were less adjustments this year than in 2016. Four centres were adjusted; three centres upward and one downward. There were issues, however, with centres marking right to the edge of tolerance in terms of leniency. The moderators made note of this practice on the specific TAC6 reports.

The variety of texts explored was again extensive with a broad range of style and genre represented in the choices of centres. The range included texts from the classics of Arthur Miller to the more contemporary choices currently on offer. There were at least 10 texts presented for the first time this year and again 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: Cagebirds, Joyriders, Living with Lady Macbeth, Sparkleshark and Dream Jobs. Some very strong candidates rose to the challenge presented by some texts and this year it was reported by several of the moderators that several candidates were "outstanding" in these complex and thought provoking roles.

Two centres chose to perform Devised Drama which worked more effectively for one centre than for the other. If Devised Work is to be presented it should represent two Drama forms and the roles which candidates create should allow them a depth of characterisation.

Assessment

In general, the assessment criteria for AO2 and AO3 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 and just within tolerance for the full range of marks. Tolerance may change for any series as a result of organisational requirements and those centres marking to this may find that their marking is beyond tolerance, leading to an adjustment.

When marking beyond tolerance occurred on the day of moderation, the appropriate adjustments were made at the post moderation meeting. The team of moderators made note on the TAC6 reports of any issues regarding inaccurate assessments. There is also a continuing tendency to award full marks for AO1; it was noted by moderators that this level of achievement was not always reflected in the outcomes for AO2 and AO3. Assessment outcomes for AO1 should correspond with those of AO2 and AO3 and be reflected in candidate notebooks.

Marking on the day of external moderation must reflect the marks awarded at internal standardisation. Centres who fell into this category received TAC6 reports which identified this practice. Please take note that adjustments are always considered if there is a mismatch between internal and external assessment.

The notification of adjustment is indicated in the TAC6 report and centres should be aware 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, however, in a few centres this year the TAC1 and EXA39 had not been finalised before the moderation visit.

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

Moderators welcomed the time afforded to them before the performances began for the consideration 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 AOs 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. There was evidence of very detailed work this year which at some centres was meaningfully annotated by teachers, however, a considerable number of notebooks failed to meet the minimum requirements.

There were also several issues this year with missing notebooks and these centres were requested to forward missing notebooks to CCEA for inspection by the senior team at post moderation. Most centres complied with this request, however, there were a small number whose missing notebooks were not received. This incomplete moderation was noted on the centres' TAC6 reports.

Standard of Presentations

Once again the drama performances were generally of a good standard with some very good, excellent and "outstanding" work in evidence. Moderators described some of the best work as "highly energetic" with "intense and engaging characterisations" and praised the centres for their "professionalism."

Nearly all of the texts proved suitable and some new texts presented "interesting challenges" for candidates. 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. It was also noted that the lack of an audience tended to detract from the overall atmosphere.

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.

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.

At four centres this year there were absent candidates on the day of moderation which proved a difficult situation for the other candidates, the teacher and the Moderator/s. Non-exam candidates were asked to read in as a result of unforeseen circumstances, however, this is far from ideal as the quality of the work does not reflect internal standardisation. Centres are therefore requested, as far as is practicable, to ensure that all candidates selected for external moderation are present on that day.

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. It was also 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 annual 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", "evaluative" and "intriguing." In the main, pupils were very engaged in this process and it was again apparent that teachers are now very skilled at leading these sessions. Effective links were often made to detailed information contained in the candidate notebooks. Teachers effectively questioned candidates on their research and rehearsal process; these are compulsory aspects in assessment of AO3. 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. Several moderators noted that some non-moderated candidates tended to talk for long periods which detracted from the available time for the moderated candidates. It is advised that only moderated candidates should participate in post-performance appraisal during external moderation.

Appraisals were more realistically assessed this year with less tendency to mark candidates in Band 4. In general they were slightly stronger than for the previous series with more research, rehearsal and evaluative comments in evidence.

Centres must ensure that appraisals take place in a quiet space to enable candidates, teachers and moderators to focus on this important process. Several appraisal sessions were interrupted by doors opening or banging; this should be avoided at centres through appropriate exam signage during the moderation session.

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 and should be within tolerance.
- 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.
- As far as possible, candidates selected for external moderation should be present on that day.
- Candidate notebooks must be present at external moderation for all units and all candidates.

Well done to all who participated so successfully in the 2017 series of GCSE Drama.

Contact details

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