

GCSE



**Chief Examiner's and
Principal Moderator's Report
Drama**

Summer Series 2019



Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of this specification for the Summer 2019 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 section on our website at www.ccea.org.uk.

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GCSE DRAMA

Principal Moderator's Report

Component 1: Devised Performance

The process of moderating Component 1 was new to centres this year and overall it was successfully addressed, but there were some technical difficulties in both recording and forwarding the performances to CCEA. It is hoped these issues will be resolved in the coming year.

In the Revised Specification, Devised Performance is now worth 25%, with 15% for the group performance or design presentation, and 10% for the Student Log which is submitted with the recording. It was generally agreed that Section 3 of the Student Log was the area which required more attention, as candidates tended to evaluate their work and others' work, rather than presenting an analysis and evaluation of self-management and working with others. This new aspect of the subject requires a lot more work from candidates and guidance from teachers.

Overall the administration was good but the eCandidate Record Sheets need to be completed correctly for every candidate. For identification purposes, each candidate should hold a printed centre and candidate number in front of them at the beginning of each recording. Many centres employed this strategy successfully.

Most centres engaged well with the pre-release stimulus material and research, and 'Friends and Enemies' was the most popular choice. The team of moderators were generally impressed with the performances and candidates were engaged and creative, with meaningful outcomes. It was also agreed that having an audience enhanced performances.

Component Overview

Students choose either a performance or design pathway. There is no requirement to choose the same pathway in both components. In response to pre-release stimulus material, students either devise and present a group performance or devise and give a design presentation. Those choosing the performance pathway are assessed on acting. Those choosing the design pathway are assessed on a presentation on their chosen design discipline.

Design students must choose one of the following design disciplines (see Appendix 4 for exact requirements):

- Costume;
- Lighting;
- Multimedia (use of image, sound, text and/or video);
- Set; or
- Sound.

All students complete a student log at the end of the devising process.

Candidates record a summary analysis and evaluation of their own and others' work in their student log, which should be in written form and may contain images.

It must include:

- Section 1: an analysis and evaluation of the process of devising a performance by investigating the pre-release stimulus material (maximum 500 words);
- Section 2: an analysis and evaluation of the research influences that contributed to the overall concept for the devised performance (maximum 500 words); and
- Section 3: an analysis and evaluation of self-management and working with others (maximum 1000 words).

2019 Pre-release Stimulus Material

Candidates were asked to create a devised performance that engages a chosen target audience using one of the following stimuli as a starting point.

The theme of “Friends or Enemies”.

or

The novel “To Kill a Mockingbird” by Harper Lee.

or

An iconic photograph of the 21st Century

The most popular choice was “Friends or Enemies” followed by “An iconic photograph of the 21st Century.”

Student Log (20 marks)

In general, the document was well completed by candidates with some very strong work in evidence. The most successful candidates were focused and precise in all sections of the log and presented a clear pathway through their evaluation and analysis of their devised work.

It is a requirement to present work in the format provided on the CCEA website, and using the correct font. All sections of the eCandidate Record Sheet must be completed by the teacher including the word count for each section of the log. Work should be presented in a stapled format, and the use of plastic folders is to be discouraged.

The standard of assessment was generally acceptable, however, 14 centres were adjusted with only one adjusted upwardly. It is advised that centres avail of the October Portfolio Clinic and Agreement Trial to ensure that standards are applied accurately.

Section 1: an analysis and evaluation of the process of devising a performance by investigating the pre-release stimulus material (maximum 500 words);

There were some very good responses; however, there was also some development required in terms of thorough and precise investigation of the pre-release stimulus material. Moderators accepted several approaches including the investigation of only one pre-release stimuli; preference would be the consideration of all three stimuli under the umbrella of the “pre-release stimulus material”, as appears in the assessment criteria. More emphasis was required on the investigation of the pre-release rather than just an evaluation of the process of devising.

Good Practice

- Work was generally well presented with word counts often identified;
- Effective use was made of relevant illustrations around investigative ideas;
- Annotation was used well to explain the allocation of marks;
- Stronger candidates presented an individual approach to the investigation of the stimulus; and
- Stronger candidates considered all 3 stimuli in this section.

Points for Consideration

- Candidates should consider the full range of stimuli in this section;
- The discussion of the stimulus should present a cohesive reasoned argument for the choice of one idea;
- This section should emphasise the investigation of the stimulus in line with the requirements of the marking criteria; and
- Work should include a definite word count.

Section 2: an analysis and evaluation of the research influences that contributed to the overall concept for the devised performance (maximum 500 words);

This section was generally well completed. There was a range of research presented and those students who exemplified how the research supported performance ideas were able to access Mark Band 4. The use of bibliographies aided the feeling of authenticity around the research undertaken.

Good Practice

- The strongest responses included a range of research;
- Research which was fully linked to the final choice of stimuli allowed access to the full range of marks;
- The use of live performances and the work of theatre practitioners strengthened the quality of research; and
- Clear links to the final concept for the devised piece aided attainment.

Points for Consideration

- Candidates, at times, presented research in descriptive terms;
- Not all research, for some candidates, was linked to the final concept;
- Some presented a limited range of research ideas; and
- Research, at times, contained only tenuous links to the final outcome; research ideas need to be directly linked to the devised piece.

Section 3: an analysis and evaluation of self-management and working with others (maximum 1000 words);

This was generally the weakest section of the log, with a tendency for students to evaluate their own and others work rather than presenting an evaluation of self-management or working with others. Page 30 of the specification gives clear examples of what this might be. This was often assessed leniently and contributed to centres requiring an overall adjustment.

Good Practice

- The strongest candidates had considered the examples given on page 30 of the specification;
- Those whose work was divided into two discreet sections tended to explore self-management and working with others in more defined terms;
- The use of action planning and target setting worked well; and
- Acting on feedback also aided the quality of the response.

Points for Consideration

- For a considerable number of candidates, more work was required on understanding the skills of self-management and working with others;
- A considerable amount of this section tended to be descriptive rather than evaluative or analytical;
- There was too much emphasis on retelling the process of putting the piece together; and
- Some candidates concentrated mainly on their own performance and the performances of others rather than analysing what was required.

Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning for theatrical performance (30 marks)

It was very gratifying to witness the performance and design work of centres through the recordings of the devised performances/presentations. The work for the most part was presented in an accessible format and clearly represented the hard work that candidates had undertaken in order to present a meaningful performance for an audience.

There was, however, a major issue with the moderation of this aspect of the component as centres had not always identified candidates prior to the performance/presentation. There were also incidents where presentations were not recorded at all.

Centres are to be reminded that recordings should be sent in the required format with candidates clearly identified at the beginning of each performance. This should be done with each candidate clearly stating their name, candidate number and role. The first candidate of each group should also state the centre number.

The use of identifying candidate photographs to accompany the recordings was viewed as very good practice by the moderation team. Centres also need to ensure that the sound quality of the recording is up to the required standard and that the level of lighting allows for identification of candidates during performances. It is important to note that the maximum number of candidates in one group is six.

Concept and Content (15 marks)

For the most part performances were engaging and linked to the pre-release stimulus material and research. Candidates were generally focused and committed to the work with outcomes which presented meaning to the audience.

Again for the majority of centres, this aspect was assessed accurately although there was a tendency towards leniency.

There was some very effective work from really strong centres which displayed clear understanding and purpose throughout the performances.

Good Practice

- The best performances evidenced outcomes which represented the chosen stimuli;
- Strong performances were often clearly supported by research;
- Presentations where the research was embedded in the performance enabled candidates to access Mark Band 4;
- Groups who chose a more non-naturalistic approach often created more impact; and
- A number of centres performed to an audience which seemed to help create the mood and atmosphere for the performance.

Points for Consideration

- Performances needed to be of the correct duration to allow access to the full mark range;
- Sometimes there was over-reliance on narrative based realism which did not always suit the strength or nature of the candidature;
- Some performances were presented in school uniform which detracted from the overall mood and atmosphere;
- The performance locations of a few centres did not enhance the devised work;
- Outside noise could be heard during some recordings which proved distracting; and
- Some performances had no audience in attendance which had an effect on the overall impact.

Application in Performance (15 marks)

Candidates generally presented work of a reasonable quality and it was clear from the footage that they were engaged in their performances. There was again some leniency in the assessment of the candidates' contribution and communication of meaning. There were also, however, some very meaningful performances.

Good Practice

- Candidates, for the most part made a meaningful contribution to the devised performance;
- All candidates presented a finished product which allowed meaning to be conveyed;
- Strong candidates contributed significantly to the overall outcomes;
- The influence of practitioners and professional performers could be seen in some of the better performances;
- The best pieces allowed all candidates an opportunity to communicate meaning;
- Performances which created effective transitions were able to access the full range of marks; and
- Designers made an effective contribution for the most part and contributed well to creating mood and atmosphere.

Points for Consideration

- A number of centres chose to perform without an audience which did not reflect the requirements of the component;
- For some candidates, the intended meaning was not fully conveyed;
- Pieces which were under time were self penalising as ideas were not developed; and
- Some performances had over-reliance on short scenes with long blackouts and unnecessary small set changes.

Summary

Centres are to be congratulated on the enthusiasm and energy of their candidates and their professional approach, for the most part, to this new component. It was clear that a lot of hard work and background research had been undertaken in order to accomplish the quality of the strongest devised performances.

Component 2: Scripted Performance

Scripted Performance is taken from the legacy specification, with some changes; it is now worth 35% and the group appraisal has been omitted. Most teachers are pleased that the appraisal aspect of the component has gone, as it often pressurised the teacher to lead the discussion and balance the analysis. There is now a requirement for all performances/presentations to be recorded and sent to CCEA as soon as possible after moderation. For the majority of centres this was successfully addressed. Over 100 texts were explored through Scripted Performance and overall the assessment criteria was appropriately applied. The team of moderators agreed that the quality of work was very impressive, and the majority of candidates realised their artistic intentions and performed their roles or presented their skills successfully.

Component Overview

Students choose either a performance or a design pathway. There is no requirement to choose the same pathway in both components. Students research and prepare a performance of their chosen published play script. Those choosing the performance pathway are assessed on acting. Those choosing the design pathway are assessed on a presentation on their chosen design discipline. Design students must choose one of the following design disciplines:

- Costume;
- Lighting;
- Multimedia (use of image, sound, text and/or video);
- Set; or
- Sound.

General Comments

The team of Moderators were generally impressed with the moderation process of this first series of the revised GCSE Drama Specification. Congratulations to pupils and teachers on this year's achievements.

Overall standards at moderation were generally good, with evidence of thorough preparation in some very strong centres, some of which were new to CCEA GCSE Drama. Performances were generally well prepared for the most part, and candidates were thoroughly engaged in the process in nearly all centres. Assessment criteria was applied appropriately, however, there were more adjustments this year than in any other previous series. Fourteen centres were adjusted overall with only one centre adjusted upward.

The variety of texts explored was extensive, with a broad range of style and genre represented in the choices of centres. The range included texts from the classics to more contemporary choices, with at least 20 texts presented for the first time this year and over 100 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. It is also not appropriate to write additional scenes.

The most popular choices this year were "Shakers with Girls Like That", "Be My Baby", "Joyriders", "Of Mice and Men" and "Bouncers". Some very strong candidates rose to the challenge presented by some great text choices.

There were a number of administrative issues identified by moderators which were generally to do with the eCandidate Record Sheets that had not been completed fully prior to moderation. Centres are to be reminded that the artistic intentions for each candidate must be identified on their eRecord along with the style and genre of the play. Centres should also supply completed copies of the EXA39 assessment sheets for the attending moderator/s.

Moderators require time before the moderation in order to read the eCandidate Record Sheets and a private space should be provided for this activity. There is also a requirement for access to a similar space for the assessment of groups between performances.

There is now a requirement for all work to be recorded and centres should ensure that this is done in line with instructions. The recording of the work should be on an accessible format and sent to CCEA as soon as possible after moderation.

Centres should adhere to the correct number of candidates per group, 6 maximum and groups should not include pupils who are not from the GCSE Drama class. If there is more than one teaching group the candidates selected should be a balanced representation from each group.

Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning for theatrical performance (10 marks)

Principal Moderator Comments

In general, the performances of the candidates' were meaningful and engaging and it was clear that candidates had worked to present pieces which were generally polished and well-rehearsed.

Good Practice

- Candidates fared well with this marking criteria and work was marked accurately for the most part;
- Play choices generally assisted the candidates in conveying meaning to an audience;
- Most candidates were able to make an impact on their audience; and
- Levels of creativity were evident for the most part.

Points for Consideration

- Lack of an audience seemed to detract from the overall impact;
- Some play choices did not enable candidates to communicate full meaning;
- Performances which were under the time limit were underdeveloped; and
- Some work was lacking in creativity and development for the marks awarded.

Apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance (60 marks)

Principal Moderator Comments

For the most part candidates realised their artistic intentions and performed their roles using a range of generally well developed skills. This assessment objective is split between skills, characterisation, artistic intention and style and genre, and there was a tendency to over mark the work. The marking criteria for voice, movement and facial expression stipulates a range of skills in each performance area, and material chosen which did not allow candidates to access that range disabled them from achieving the full mark range. Marks awarded for artistic intention were mostly accurate but there was leniency around style and genre as this had not always been clearly defined in the eCandidate Record Sheets.

Design work in the main had merit and contributed positively to the overall outcomes for the most part. At times, however, design ideas were not fully integrated and the work seemed to be rushed or ill-considered, and sometimes a leniency in marking.

Acting

Vocal skills (15 marks)

Movement and Facial Expression (15 marks)

Good Practice

- The best performances showcased a variety of skills, enabling candidates to access the full range of marks;
- Plays which suited the ability range of candidates supported the presentation of skills; and
- Candidates who integrated their skills of voice, movement and facial expression were successful in gaining the top range of marks.

Points for Consideration

- Candidates who were not always secure with dialogue did not display a confident range of vocal skills;
- Material which made little demand for movement did not always allow candidates to access the full range of marks; and
- The skills of facial expression were often underutilized and sometimes over marked.

Characterisation and Realisation of Artistic Intentions (15 marks)

Style and Genre (15 marks)

Good Practice

- The best performers presented characterisations which demonstrated full understanding of their role;
- The clarity of the artistic intentions was conveyed in the strongest performances; and
- Style and genre were understood and demonstrated in performance through the best work of candidates.

Points for Consideration

- Not all play choices enabled candidates to present well developed characterisations;
- The unclear nature of the artistic intention for the character disabled candidates from achieving in Mark Band 4; and
- Style and genre which was not clearly defined resulted in the candidates lack of understanding in performance.

Design

Presentation and Documentation (15 marks)

Use of materials and Equipment (15 marks)

Good Practice

- The best documentation had taken full account of the requirements in appendix 4 of the specification;
- A clear rationale for the use of final ideas enabled design candidates to do well;
- Design skills of the best candidates were clearly evident in the presentation and documentation; and
- The better candidates chose their materials well and were able to use these effectively to enhance performances.

Points for Consideration

- A number of design candidates were missing key aspects from the requirements in appendix 4 of the specification, this should be regarded as a checklist for inclusion;
- The concept for some design candidates was not defined and final ideas were not justified;
- Choice of materials did not always enhance the performance; and
- Ideas, at times, were not fully considered and work seemed rushed.

Realisation of the Design (15 marks)

Style and Genre (15 marks)

Good Practice

- The best designers presented concepts which demonstrated full understanding of the chosen play;
- The clarity of the artistic intentions was conveyed in the strongest designs; and
- Style and genre were understood and demonstrated in design through the best work of candidates.

Points for Consideration

- Not all play choices enabled candidates to present well developed concepts;
- The unclear nature of the artistic intention for the designer disabled candidates from achieving Mark Band 4; and
- Style and genre which was not clearly defined resulted in the candidates lack of understanding in their design for performance.

Summary

Centres are to be congratulated on this very successful moderation. The work of the candidates was in some cases “exceptional” and the wide range of play choices, including some very engaging new texts, was commendable. Well done on a very successful first moderation of this newly revised GCSE Drama Specification.

Chief Examiner's Report

Component 3: Knowledge and Understanding of Drama

The examination now has seven questions with progression in terms of answers from quite simple responses to those requiring more knowledge and understanding of the text. The paper is 1 hour 30 minutes long but candidates wrote considerably less overall than in the previous specification.

The paper provided a range of differentiated questions to enable all candidates to have a fair opportunity of answering at their level. All candidates were able to attempt all questions and weaker candidates were able to achieve some marks in all questions. A few candidates attempted to answer questions out of order and this was self-penalising as they did not complete the paper.

Some questions were in part or fully from the legacy paper but there were also new questions which were well answered, and this was due perhaps to the comprehensive support materials which were provided by CCEA and the excellent teaching which takes place in the schools.

The paper is now answered on only one text. "Blood Brothers" was still the most popular text but "Sparkleshark" is now also very popular as well as "Juno and the Paycock" and "The Crucible".

Q1 (a) This question is new and the information required to answer the question is found on the CCEA website. Candidates are asked to 'briefly' outline their ideas on two aspects of the play. There are 6 marks available, 3 marks for each aspect and these are awarded for any three relevant and appropriate points, being in line with the mark scheme. In an effort to keep the answer brief, the points should be precise and could be in bullet form.

Many candidates spent a lot of time relating information which was not relevant to either 'social context' or 'language'. They often re-told the story of the play, described the first performance of the play, gave background information on the playwright or other information which wasn't relevant to the question, and they were not rewarded for this information. It was clear that many candidates had learnt a lot of information to answer the question but unfortunately were not always selective with their responses to the question. Some answers were excellent with very precise, clear and relevant information which was briefly outlined.

(b) This question is also new to candidates and again, detailed guidance material is available on the CCEA website. As a result, there were many very impressive and imaginative answers to this question and it is gratifying that most candidates are being taken to 'live' theatre events.

The question asked them to refer to 'one SOUND idea'. The 'one' was underlined and many candidates referred to a number of ideas. The word 'sound' was in bold capitals and some candidates referred to lighting. Some candidates referred to one sound idea and then applied a completely different idea to their play. Also, while some ideas were extremely imaginative and skilfully analysed, many sound effects were very general and predictable and, in fact, already existed in the sounds written in the play, such as 'guns explode' in Blood Brothers, 'footsteps are heard' in "Juno and the Paycock" or 'a bellowing cow' in "The Crucible".

The question requested one sound idea and suggested four aspects to be included – the title of the theatre event, a description of the idea, how you could use the idea in your play and an evaluation of what you achieved. Each section carries marks so that most candidates were rewarded, and top band answers referred appropriately to each section.

- Q2 (a)** This question should have been familiar to candidates as it is almost identical to the costume question from the legacy paper. The only difference being that period and status are now part of justification in Q2(b) answer, and make-up, accessories and props were added as we found that candidates had been naturally adding these in their answers and therefore should be rewarded.

Most answers were in band 3 or 4. As in previous years, the drawing itself is not rewarded and candidates receive marks for clear, precise and imaginative annotation.

Many of the annotations were extremely perceptive and thorough, and related to the specific moment in the play which was requested. A few candidates had unfortunately referred to the wrong character and received no marks.

- (b)** This question was very well answered when the candidate clearly used the annotations in Question 2(a) to structure their response. Only justification is rewarded and some candidates simply described the element of costuming, and often added too much information about the character and commented on their actions rather than giving specific reasons for why they had chosen the particular aspect of the costume.

Period, status and an appropriate quotation which was linked to the costume, from any part of the play, were rewarded in this answer.

- Q3 (a)** This question was new to candidates. Play texts are written to be performed and it is extremely important for candidates to realise the practical elements of staging a performance for an audience. Again, seeing 'live' theatre is very beneficial for candidates in answering this question.

Candidates and teachers would benefit from looking at some online resources to build up their vocabulary of staging such as stage positions, upstage/downstage, the cyc (cyclorama), backdrop, wings, flats, trucks, apron, etc. There were many very impressive answers reflecting practical knowledge and understanding of the skills of staging a play.

Most candidates used a bird's-eye view of the stage which was most effective and some successfully used a 3D approach, but a significant number of candidates were not able to draw the correct shape of a stage. Many candidates used a key which was successful, and best placed on the same page as the drawing which is best as landscape on a full A4 page. The annotation should be similar to the costume question but should be self-explanatory and no added comments or justification are requested or rewarded.

With respect to backdrops or 'backing' on stage, it should be made clear that exits/entrances such as working doors and also windows etc., may require 'backing' as part of the staging, if sightlines allow audiences to see directly into the wings.

A backdrop, skyline, city-scape or a ground-row and lighting on the cyclorama would also be recommended. Curtaining or 'blacks' may also be used as backing but need to be clearly identified in the annotation.

Many of the set texts have a 'composite' set which may change very little, but candidates are advised to follow the staging directions suggested by the playwright and not to devise their own interpretation. With a composite set such as *Blood Brothers*, the simple placing of a lamp-post would suggest a street and a fence would be enough to suggest a garden. Candidates are advised not to over-complicate the staging detail as a suggestion of location is often most effective and can easily be removed for the next scene.

Some candidates had suggested the use of a revolve for "The Crucible" which could have been successful, but unfortunately the candidates did not fully grasp the practical problems of the concept.

Sight-lines have emerged as an issue for candidates and it such an important aspect of staging. Some candidates had placed part of the set, such as a fireplace or dresser, at the front of the stage and therefore had seriously restricted the audience's view of the stage.

It is advised that staging should be prepared and set for a typical school proscenium-arched stage.

- (b)** This question perhaps caused most concern for candidates and examiners found a range of approaches in answering the question. The focus is 'rehearsal' work and it is 'as a director' that the candidate is approaching the answer. Again, this is a legacy question but in a simpler form as only one rehearsal idea has to be explored and it is within the extract of 12 – 15 lines, and not for the whole play which was asked in the previous paper. The candidate is being asked as a director to give some advice to the actors for the extract and the answer is structured so that the candidate should firstly identify the mood and context and, as a result, suggest an appropriate rehearsal idea which might improve the performance. The candidate should develop the rehearsal idea and then show the result of the rehearsal work through looking at text. The candidate might wish to focus on any aspects of voice, movement, facial expression or other aspects of performance in this part of the answer.

It is a much shorter answer than the past but the candidate should be able to briefly summarise the mood and context, develop the rehearsal idea and then look at some text detail. Some candidates looked at a number of rehearsal ideas but only the best one will be rewarded. The most popular rehearsal ideas were hot seating, thought tracking and conscience alley and some used improvisation. *Le Coq's* '7 levels of tension' and Stanislavski's 'Emotion Memory' were also suggested but the candidates did not always understand these quite sophisticated concepts.

- (c) This question is very similar to last year's 3(b) question, except that it deals with a short extract from the set text and not a second text. It is from the perspective of the actor and may be answered in the first person 'I'. The same lines of text may be used in both Question 3(b) and 3(c) but in answering this question, the candidate will clearly focus on the use of voice in performance for one actor, and the focus will change every year.

As the focus this year is on voice, the candidate is expected to use a full range of vocal ability by referring to changes of pitch, pace, projection, tone, volume, use of pause, emphasis and inflexion. Top band answers had chosen perhaps 4 or 5 quotations and demonstrated perceptive knowledge and understanding of how the character uses voice in performance for an audience. Vocal detail should be quite specific and phrases such as 'sarcastic tone' or 'angry voice', do not give the level of detail which is required as it is vague and general. Candidates should try to use a range of text to avoid repetition of the same vocal direction for every line.

Candidates should avoid too much description and refer to specific words and phrases from the text.

Time Allowance

The time allowed for the examination was sufficient to allow most candidates to complete all seven questions and achieve top band answers. Pupils wrote less this year as there were more questions to answer and therefore more thinking and planning time was required.

Finding the extract in Question 3 caused more time than expected for some candidates, and the text of the extract will be printed for candidates next year so that they don't have to spend time finding it in their copy of the play.

Contact details

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