

DRAMA

Paper 0411/11
Written Examination

Key messages

- Candidates are required to answer all questions in **Section A**, one question in **Section B** and one in **Section C**.
- Candidates should read all the questions very carefully to ensure that they fully understand what is being asked, particularly where there is more than one element to the question.
- Candidates need to consider carefully which question to answer in **Sections B** and **C** and should not attempt a question if they do not have the technical knowledge required to answer it.
- Use the number of marks available as a guide to how much detail is needed in the answer. Many candidates continue to waste valuable time by providing extended answers to questions that are worth only 2 or 3 marks. Candidates may use bullet points where appropriate to respond to questions in **Section A**.
- Centres should engage practically with the stimuli provided in the pre-release material to enable candidates to show greater understanding of the challenges presented to them.
- An improvement in responses to questions in **Section A** was again evident this year but answers to the questions in **Sections B** and **C**, which require more understanding, development, detail and/or discussion, continue to cause some difficulties.
- Literary or narrative approaches to answering questions must be avoided. For example, where questions ask the candidate to provide advice on how a dramatic role should be performed, it is not enough to recount the story or to provide detail of the character's personality, attitudes and relationships without making clear how the character should be heard and seen on stage in order to convey those traits.

General comments

There was some evidence that the Glossary of dramatic and theatrical terms provided in the syllabus is being used by many Centres and as a result a number of responses showed better understanding of many subject-specific terms. Some candidates also showed improvement in understanding and communicating how drama is created. Many had evidently engaged practically with the play extract and they showed a greater understanding of the text than those who had not explored it in practical terms. Candidates are, however, less confident in the use of performance terms and whilst there was a handful of successful responses, many candidates who attempted such questions were unable to show their practical understanding.

An improvement was clearly evident in responses to the questions in **Section A**. A number of candidates answered with bullet point comments; these not only save valuable time but also allow for succinct and focused responses. Some candidates wrote far too much, particularly in answer to questions worth 2 or 3 marks. Equally, some responses on the devised work included a detailed synopsis of the piece before attempting to answer the question. Whilst brief, explicit references to the content of the piece are helpful to Examiners, candidates should avoid long and detailed narratives.

A number of candidates missed out one or more of **Questions 6–8** and in doing so could not access a significant number of marks. A few candidates attempted all questions in **Section B** and **Section C** instead of one question from each.

With so many marks available in **Sections B** and **C**, it is important that candidates choose a question which allows them to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Each year a number of candidates appear to choose the 'wrong' question – earlier responses in the paper suggest that they would have been better served by choosing a question which focused on a different area.

The approach to the devised pieces continues to vary considerably and not all candidates had engaged practically with the stimuli in the pre-release material. Mundane and unimaginative approaches to devising

tend to lead to weak responses to questions based on the stimuli, whereas innovative and creative work gives candidates the chance to access the higher levels of the mark scheme.

Evaluative comment, generally required in responses relating to the devised pieces, tended to be rather simplistic and superficial. Candidates need to consider carefully the reactions of their audience and possibly feedback that was given either during the rehearsal or performance process. Where performances had the intended impact on their audience, candidates should be able to communicate clearly the difference between what was expected and the actual outcome. Furthermore they should be able to discuss what dramatic techniques were used to bring about the intended reaction and indeed the relative success of this, providing a full, detailed description rather than a simplistic comment to the effect that 'it was successful' or 'it was not successful'.

Handwriting was generally legible and the work of many of the better candidates was carefully thought-out, well-organised and clearly communicated.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Questions 1–5 *The Naked King*

Question 1

Most candidates were able to offer an appropriate costume supported by a reason. Since the stage directions simply stated that the PRIME MINISTER is 'a fussy old man with a long white beard' there was a degree of freedom open to them. Examiners were looking for answers that implied status and position linked to the Court. In some cases candidates could not access both marks either because the choice of costume was not specific or because they only responded to half of the question, i.e. offering a suggestion but not a reason, or a reason without a specific suggestion or not offering a suggestion at all. Answers which stated that the character has a long white beard were not credited as a beard is not part of a costume.

Many candidates offered a long and detailed response with a variety of suggestions for the costume and a range of comments to support their answers. The question was worth two marks and therefore one valid suggestion and one valid reason was all that was required to score both marks.

Question 2

Most candidates were able to show a thorough understanding of facial expressions and/or physical gestures and were able to give three suggestions. The question asked candidates to 'identify' and therefore explanations were not needed. In many cases, candidates offered more than three suggestions and/or provided comprehensive descriptions of the reasoning behind their choices which was not required.

Some offered vocal suggestions as to how particular lines might have been spoken: no marks were available for this. Examiners were looking for comments that would bring the drama to life through the use of gesture and/or facial expression. This might have been through general suggestions such as a 'happy face' or giving a little more detail such as an 'incredulous look and a wagging finger'. Both were acceptable. The most common suggestion for the use of physical gesture was 'pointing' at something specific or a general comment on posture.

The best responses were those that were succinct in the form of three bullet points which clearly identified the candidates' intentions.

Question 3

Some candidates found this a challenging question and responses were varied. There was a tendency to focus on performance over role and discuss how the actor playing the SAVANT might contribute to the drama by means of his skills. Hence a number of responses discussed the use of pace, energy, physicality etc. at the expense of how the role itself was designed to have an impact on the action.

The best responses highlighted how the SAVANT was there to impart information concerning the Princess's lineage, to dominate and control the pacing of the scene and to appear to belittle or undermine the King without being blatantly insubordinate.

Less successful responses communicated the action without indicating its importance or considering the meaning behind the drama.

Question 4

Central to this particular passage is the 'presence' of the King's new clothes. Their invisibility provides CHRISTIAN with numerous excellent opportunities which, taken in tandem with his delight in the multiple angles of deception that are open to him (depending on whom he is addressing), provide the focus for answering this question. Avoidance of the 'cloth' on the floor, handling actions such as folding or cutting, mock horror when someone steps on the 'material' and feigned obscurity when supposedly hidden behind the material were all opportunities for physicality. Most responses identified one or two of these and made suggestions as to how the actor could maximise opportunities for physicality. Few candidates developed the answer fully and with detailed reference to the text.

Question 5

Many candidates were able to analyse the specific passage and comment on what was happening within it but whilst a majority were able to suggest a range of dramatic techniques linked to the action, they did not use these as a means to explore the PRINCESS's character.

The more astute responses identified discernible character traits such as impulsiveness, insecurity and determination and were able to demonstrate how these were evidenced in the text by citing specific moments and making suggestions how the actress playing the role could represent or suggest these.

Questions 6–8 *Devised work*

Question 6

Only a minority of candidates provided enough detail to meet the 3- or 4-mark bands in this question.

Technical language was a barrier with some interpreting the request for a discussion of the 'atmosphere', as an opportunity to provide a narrative of their piece during which there was minimal reference to atmosphere such as 'tense', 'scary' or 'happy'. Examiners were looking for how dramatic technique was used in creating interest in the drama; these might have been aspects that introduced change, challenge or instability into the action which later led to a resolution.

Typically candidates achieved two marks by referring to a moment in their piece which was an example of atmosphere and offering a simple or general comment on its effectiveness. Where candidates did comment on its effectiveness, it tended to be quite simplistic or general, often by making a vague reference to the reaction of the audience. Some references to the effectiveness were superficial in that a comment was provided but not substantiated.

Question 7

Many candidates continue to confuse the term 'prop' with 'set' or 'costume'. When asked about props, candidates are best advised to concentrate on hand props: smaller items that actors might use to contribute to the action of the drama. Consequently, examiners could not credit, for example, chairs arranged on stage in such a way as to establish a bus interior (i.e. setting), but where items of set/costume were used physically by the actor to add to the drama (e.g. a character offering another a chair to convey courtesy), marks were awarded.

Props may not have been used in the original piece but most candidates acknowledged the use of the word 'potential' in the question and therefore offered suggestions as to what they might use if they were to perform the piece again.

Few candidates accessed the full 4 marks since, having identified the prop, and its purpose, they were unable to suggest how the prop might have been used to add to the drama.

Question 8

Most candidates were able to access at least one mark in this question simply by stating one instance of where impact was made or a general comment on how effective the piece was. References to costume, lights and sound were given credit where appropriate. As in **Question 6**, sometimes references to the effectiveness were superficial in that a comment was provided but not substantiated.

Generally this question had a good response with many candidates able to offer suggestions as to how the intended (or unintended) impact worked out in performance.

Section B

Questions 9–11 *The Naked King*

Question 9

There were many opportunities for imagination in this question and the possibilities were endless. Many candidates did not seem to realise that they could suggest any design concept they liked, provided that they could explore, explain and justify it in relation to the extract. Centres are encouraged to ensure that candidates think beyond their own performance facilities and demonstrate originality and flair in the context of a more ambitious stage.

The word ‘challenges’ contained in the question was seen by some as synonymous with the word ‘problems’ and a number of candidates elected to discuss the limitations of their own performance rather than considering how solutions could be found to satisfy the theatrical applications inherent in the extract. This in turn led on to discussion that dealt with setting issues in the most simplistic terms. There is nothing wrong with opting for simplicity but in terms of the demands of the question this approach meant that the answers themselves were also basic.

Those answers which did go beyond the basic and simplistic varied, from those which were full of fantasy and striking visual imagery but were totally impractical in theatrical terms, to those which systematically swept through the extract providing well-conceived, original and above all practical solutions to facilitate the action, all within a clearly defined overall design concept.

Question 10

This was a question primarily about directorial concept and the role of the director and allowed candidates who have an interest in this area to demonstrate their knowledge and expertise.

A relatively small number of candidates chose to answer it and in some cases they appeared to be unprepared for this type of question. Most did not recognise the need to outline the directorial concept and therefore found it difficult to access the mark scheme. Others focused on the quotation rather than the question itself. In one or two cases candidates focused on the political history behind the text and ended up discussing political dogma which, though impressive, did not address the question.

Some essays explored lighting, sound and costume which showed a lack of understanding of production roles – although some credit was given as the director is responsible for the overall vision of the production.

To access the higher bands of the mark scheme, candidates needed to demonstrate a practical understanding of the play and offer detailed suggestions as to what the director’s intentions might be and how these could be realised showing creative solutions.

Question 11

This was a very popular question, which was generally tackled well.

The question was aimed at those who have a particular interest in acting, and asked candidates to not only demonstrate their knowledge of the KING’s character, but also to show their understanding of how the part might be played in performance.

Most candidates were able to make a range of basic but valid comments about the character of the KING. Many responses went further by offering suggestions relating to application of dramatic technique.

Sometimes this was restricted to rather general advice, often vague and non-specific and therefore could not access the full range of marks available. However, there were many who gave specific suggestions, which were firmly based on both text and character and demonstrated a detailed and practical understanding of how to play the role.

Some candidates chose to focus on character without much suggestion of how this could be communicated in terms of practical application. Some responses were overly concerned with the political undertones of the play which, as candidates sought to bring these into focus, relapsed into mere recounting of events within the extract as a means to illustrate the KING's character. Some credit was awarded for this, but it does illustrate a basic misunderstanding about the role of the actor as opposed to that of the director and therefore candidates who concentrated heavily in this area to the detriment of characterisation and dramatic technique would not have been able to access the higher mark bands.

Section C

Questions 12–14 *Devised work*

Question 12

This was a very popular question. Responses typically included a lengthy introductory paragraph explaining the plot before addressing the specifics of the question. This used up valuable time and no credit was awarded for anything unrelated to a specific discussion of costume and make-up.

Candidates were required to discuss the 'potential' for costume and make-up although the majority of responses referred only to what was actually done rather than what might have been done. This meant that answers tended to be restricted to the methods used in the performances: either little costume or make-up was used, or everyday clothes and street make-up was employed. Such responses neglected the potential for their use and therefore engaged with the question at only a basic level.

There were some good responses which, even when they were confined to jeans and tee shirts, managed to go beyond the basic. An example of this was where costume and the bodies and faces of the actors showed signs of distress following some trauma, effected by the addition of 'dirt' or rips to clothes with hollowed eyes or simulated wounds through the use of make-up.

In answering questions of this kind, candidates need to be much more aware of how costume and make-up can be used. Even where their own production has not used them, they have the option of envisaging the potential for a more complex scenario and one that requires aspects of costume and make-up to fulfil the directorial concept.

Question 13

This was also a popular question. It required candidates not only to identify the key relationships but also to say how effective their dramatisation had been. Candidates could explore the practical dramatic interaction and also the given circumstances and context in which the drama develops. There were also opportunities to relate action to context through, for example, gender, social class, politics etc.

All candidates were able to clearly state the most significant relationships together with basic justification. Many then lost direction and provided a narrative of the devised piece without addressing the rest of question. Some were able to complement their answer with details about a specific relationship but also needed to go on to explain how the relationships were brought to life and what purpose they served in the context of plot development and the intended message or performance objective.

Very few responses were able to offer any insight into the contribution that the relationships had made to the performance or provide any evaluation of their effectiveness and therefore could not access the higher bands of the mark scheme. Where there was some evaluative comment, in this and other similar questions, it was typified by simplistic statements of whether it worked or not. To improve, candidates needed to clearly communicate that the outcome was a result of careful planning and crafting. There should be comment regarding how and why decisions had been made to do things in a particular way, preferably related to feedback received from others. Drama is primarily about the impact a performance has on its audience and consequently any evaluation should make reference to this. Where this was attempted, the statements tended to be quite superficial, e.g. stating how the audience 'felt', and lacked substantiation.

The best responses came from those who had gone through the process of developing and actually performing their piece to an audience. In those cases, candidates could offer a perceptive evaluation of their performance with well selected references to both specific moments of action and the overall performance objective and what impact this had on the audience.

Question 14

This question required candidates to be clear about their use of pacing. Many candidates who attempted it did not appear to have understood fully the meaning or significance of dramatic pacing, with many responses indicating that drama was realised either at a 'fast' pace or a 'slow' one with, just occasionally, variations in between. This was repeated frequently, in scene-by-scene descriptions which started 'fast' and then got slower or vice versa.

Although such answers showed a basic understanding of how performances might undergo a development from a slow pace to higher, quicker levels, candidates also needed to recognise the relationship between pace and performance dynamics. A significant number of candidates seemed uncertain how to differentiate between energy and pace. There was an apparent certainty that in order to catch and hold the attention of the audience a high-energy fast pace is essential and that if the pace is slow then the energy will be too and hence the audience will 'lose interest'.

To improve, candidates need to understand how pacing can be applied through the dynamics of dialogue, physicality, plot structure etc. In order to access the 'Understanding' band of the mark scheme candidates needed to be able to demonstrate that variations in pace can be effected, for example, by the way dialogue is created and delivered, or how the physical dynamics of a piece can change the tempo – and hence the pace – from one dramatic moment to the next. They should also perceive that the way the drama is developed and structured through plot, narrative exposition and the creation of moments of tension, conflict and climax can also affect the pace of the drama.

To access the 'Evaluation' band candidates needed to be prepared to identify and assess in detail the effectiveness of these techniques and moments of variation within the context of the performance intention and the perceived impact on the audience.

DRAMA

Paper 0411/12
Written Examination

Key messages

- Candidates are required to answer all questions in **Section A**, one question in **Section B** and one in **Section C**.
- Candidates should read all the questions very carefully to ensure that they fully understand what is being asked, particularly where there is more than one element to the question.
- Candidates need to consider carefully which question to answer in **Sections B** and **C** and should not attempt a question if they do not have the technical knowledge required to answer it.
- Use the number of marks available as a guide to how much detail is needed in the answer. Many candidates continue to waste valuable time by providing extended answers to questions that are worth only 2 or 3 marks. Candidates may use bullet points where appropriate to respond to questions in **Section A**.
- Centres should engage practically with the stimuli provided in the pre-release material to enable candidates to show greater understanding of the challenges presented to them.
- An improvement in responses to questions in **Section A** was again evident this year but answers to the questions in **Sections B** and **C**, which require more understanding, development, detail and/or discussion, continue to cause some difficulties.
- Literary or narrative approaches to answering questions must be avoided. For example, where questions ask the candidate to provide advice on how a dramatic role should be performed, it is not enough to recount the story or to provide detail of the character's personality, attitudes and relationships without making clear how the character should be heard and seen on stage in order to convey those traits.
- Candidates should be familiar with the dramatic and technical terms in current use. An extensive (but not exhaustive) glossary is provided in the syllabus to assist in the identification of key terms.

General comments

There was some evidence that the Glossary of dramatic and theatrical terms provided in the syllabus is being used by many Centres and as a result a number of responses showed better understanding of many subject-specific terms. Some candidates also showed improvement in understanding and communicating how drama is created. This was evident in questions like **Question 9**, where responses identified not only key characteristics but also brought the character to life through engagement with dramatic technique. In some cases, candidates had evidently engaged practically with the extract and therefore were able to show a greater understanding of the text.

Candidates tend to be less confident when answering technical/design questions, and whilst there were some responses that were the exception to the rule, many were unable to demonstrate practical understanding. Some candidates listed key technical elements regardless of the question being asked, and this resulted in essays which lacked much individuality and creativity.

Some of the candidates who attempted **Question 11** did not appear to have engaged practically with the extract and therefore their answers lacked the understanding of the directorial concept that was needed to access the higher mark bands.

With so many marks available in **Sections B** and **C**, it is important that candidates choose a question which allows them to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Each year a number of candidates appear to choose the 'wrong' question – earlier responses in the paper suggest that they would have been better served by choosing a question which focused on a different area.

An improvement was clearly evident in responses to the questions in **Section A**. A number of candidates answered with bullet point comments; these not only save valuable time but also allow for succinct and focused responses. Some candidates wrote far too much, particularly in answer to questions worth 2 or 3

marks. Equally, some responses on the devised work included a detailed synopsis of the piece before attempting to answer the question. Whilst brief, explicit references to the content of the piece are helpful to Examiners, candidates should avoid long and detailed narratives.

The approach to the devised pieces continues to vary considerably and not all candidates had engaged practically with the stimuli in the pre-release material. Mundane and unimaginative approaches to devising tend to lead to weak responses to questions based on the stimuli, whereas innovative and creative work gives candidates the chance to access the higher levels of the mark scheme.

Evaluative comment, generally required in responses relating to the devised pieces, tended to be rather simplistic and superficial. Candidates need to consider carefully the reactions of their audience and possibly feedback that was given either during the rehearsal or performance process. Where performances had the intended impact on their audience, candidates should be able to communicate clearly the difference between what was expected and the actual outcome. Furthermore they should be able to discuss what dramatic techniques were used to bring about the intended reaction and indeed the relative success of this, providing a full, detailed description rather than a simplistic comment to the effect that 'it was successful' or 'it was not successful'.

Handwriting was generally legible and the work of many of the better candidates was carefully thought-out, well-organised and clearly communicated.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Questions 1–5 *The Madness of George III*

Question 1

Most candidates were able to offer an appropriate costume supported by a reason. Some candidates had noticed that advice was offered in the stage directions (wig, ripped waistcoat) and therefore used this in their answer. Examiners were looking for something that implied 'pomp and circumstance', power, wealth, status, period or the grand occasion into which the KING was entering. Where candidates lost marks, this was due either to their choice of costume not being specific or by only responding to half of the question: that is offering a suggestion but not a reason, or a reason without being specific in their costume suggestion or not offering any suggestion at all.

Many candidates offered a long and detailed response with a variety of suggestions for the costume and a range of comments to support their answers. The question was worth two marks and therefore one valid suggestion and one valid reason was all that was required to score both marks.

Question 2

Most candidates were able to show a thorough understanding of facial expressions and/or physical gestures and were able to give three suggestions. The question asked candidates to 'identify' and therefore explanations were not needed. In many cases, candidates offered more than three suggestions and/or provided comprehensive descriptions of the reasoning behind their choices which was not required. Some offered vocal suggestions as to how particular lines might have been spoken: no marks were available for this. Examiners were looking for comments that would bring the drama to life through the use of gesture and/or facial expression. This might have consisted of general suggestions such as a 'happy face', or giving a little more detail such as 'a curious look, most notably a raised eyebrow'. Both were acceptable. The most common suggestion for the use of physical gesture was 'pointing' at something specific or a general comment on posture.

The best responses were those that were succinct in the form of three bullet points which clearly identified the candidates' intentions.

Question 3

Many candidates showed a good understanding of the text and were able to recognise DR WILLIS's different attitude towards the King compared to the other doctors. The best responses highlighted how WILLIS took control of the situation from the King and treated him just like an ordinary person. Many recognised how he

angered the King. There were references to the King being 'shown up' or 'embarrassed' in front of others. Some made clear the power and control WILLIS had over the King and that this was unexpected and created tension. To access the full range of marks, candidates needed not only to comment on how WILLIS created drama throughout the extract, but to also link this clearly to references in the passage and in doing so, show a good understanding of the text and the dramatic function.

Where the responses were less successful, candidates communicated the action without stating the importance or meaning behind the drama.

Question 4

Physicality is a term that many candidates appeared to find challenging and therefore there was a mixed response to this question.

This particular scene sees a violent outburst in which the King attempts to throttle the PRINCE OF WALES who in turn has to be revived. There was much opportunity for candidates to highlight and select moments for the physical actions that might be shown by the PRINCE in order to mirror his character, the mood and the action.

The best responses explored the majority of the given passage, made specific references to it to demonstrate their understanding, and offered techniques that were specific to physicality. Less successful answers simply analysed what was happening in the scene. Many were quite simplistic, commenting generally on how specific lines might have been spoken, while others managed to offer a range of dramatic techniques but without offering any suggestion that could be interpreted as physicality.

Question 5

There were a number of comments in the stage directions that might have assisted candidates with this particular question. For example, PITT is described near the start of the extract as 'a long, unbending figure in early middle age'. Scene 6 sees the desperation of PITT as he fears losing power and this results in him reaching for a swig from his hip flask, something noted in the stage directions as being a regular occurrence. The best responses noted these characteristics and were able to bring them to life through lively and effective suggestions for a variety of specific dramatic techniques. Such responses showed a clear understanding of the text, of PITT himself and communicated an excellent practical understanding of how drama might be played out in performance.

A large number of candidates simply commented on what was happening in the passage. Others were able to offer a range of dramatic techniques, often by going through the extract systematically with suggestions for each line. To improve, these responses needed to link to the character.

Some candidates did show understanding of the demands of this question although focused exclusively on one aspect, such as his boldness (or desperation) in thrusting the pen toward the King, to the exclusion of any other considerations. The best responses showed an understanding of the complexities of the character and provided clear, specific and well-justified suggestions about performance techniques that would be effective.

Questions 6–8 *Devised work*

Question 6

Only a minority of candidates provided enough detail to meet the 3- or 4-mark requirements in this question.

Technical language was a barrier for many with some confusion about the meaning of the term 'dramatic conflict'. Many simply provided a narrative of their piece. Examiners were looking for how dramatic technique was used in creating interest in the drama; this might have been aspects that introduced change, challenge or instability into the action which later led to a resolution.

Typically a candidate achieved two marks by referring to a moment in their piece which was an example of dramatic conflict and offering a simple or general comment on its effectiveness.

Where candidates did comment on its effectiveness, it tended to be quite simplistic or general, often by making a vague reference to the reaction of the audience. Some references to the effectiveness were superficial in that a comment was provided but not substantiated.

Question 7

Many candidates continue to confuse the term 'prop' with 'set' or 'costume'. When asked about props, candidates are best advised to concentrate on hand props: smaller items that actors might use to contribute to the action of the drama. Where items of set/costume were used physically by the actor to add to the drama, credit was, however, given.

Props may not have been used in the original piece but most candidates acknowledged the use of the word 'potential' in the question and therefore offered suggestions as to what they might use if they were to perform the piece again.

Many candidates were able to identify a prop and its purpose but were unable to suggest how it might have been used and therefore could not access the full range of marks available.

Question 8

Generally this question had a good response with many candidates able to offer suggestions as to how the intended mood was played out in performance. This was often through the style of dialogue, use of facial expression, gesture or pace.

The main differential for this particular question was in the evaluation with most candidates being able to offer a general comment on its success with only a few managing to offer a good insight into how successful it was in performance. As in **Question 6**, some references to the effectiveness were superficial in that a comment was provided but not substantiated.

Section B

Questions 9–11 *The Madness of George III*

Question 9

This was a very popular question, which was generally tackled well. The question was aimed at those who have a particular interest in acting, and asked candidates not only to demonstrate their knowledge of the KING's character, but also to show their understanding of how the part might be played in performance.

Most candidates were able to make a range of valid comments about his character although some described aspects of 'a' king, rather than those of King George III, which did not show an understanding of the role of the KING in this context.

Many responses demonstrated a detailed and sophisticated understanding and were able to support their observations on the KING's character with well-chosen and specific references to the text. Other responses went further, as asked for in the question, and offered suggestions as to the application of dramatic technique. Sometimes this was restricted to rather general advice, often vague and non-specific but there were many who gave specific suggestions, which were firmly based on both text and character and demonstrated a detailed and practical understanding of how to play the role.

Some candidates gave detailed responses referring to choice of costume, sound and lighting. Some credit was awarded for this, but it does illustrate a basic misunderstanding of roles and responsibilities in performance. Candidates who concentrated heavily in this area at the expense of characterisation and dramatic technique were not able to access the full range of marks.

Question 10

This was attempted by a large number of candidates. Some responses clearly demonstrated technical know-how which went well beyond the stage directions provided in the extract. A number of candidates wrote what they knew about set design but without taking into account the demands of this particular extract which resulted in simplistic, uncreative solutions that created more challenges than answers.

Most candidates recognised some of the challenges for a set designer. These were presented either in the form of a diagram or through a narrative response which gave rudimentary suggestions as to how a set design could be used.

Some were able to demonstrate that they understood the performance space (layout, dimensions) and gave reasons for the choices they were making. They also made some use of the stage directions that were given and were able to support such guidance with some additional comment or reasoning.

The best responses offered a clear concept of how their design supported the drama, with specific suggestions as to how the challenges could be overcome. Some candidates were able to explore the ideas phase and developed their response to explain how this was then realised in the performance space, supported by reasons for the choices made.

Many responses simply gave a narrative response as to what the set would look like with no supportive comments or reasoning. A small number provided only a diagram with limited additional information. Others explored a range of possibilities but some of these were overcomplicated, unworkable or confusing as to how they might actually be realised.

Question 11

This was a question primarily about directorial concept and the role of the director and it allowed candidates who have an interest in this area to demonstrate their knowledge and expertise.

A relatively small number of candidates chose to answer it and in some cases they appeared to be unprepared for this type of question or focused too much on the quotation at the expense of the question itself. Most did not recognise the need to outline a directorial concept and in some cases the question was answered from an actor's perspective. Some candidates attempted unsuccessfully to decipher the given quotation.

Some essays explored lighting, sound and costume which showed a lack of understanding of production roles, although some credit was given as the director is responsible for the overall vision of the production.

To improve, candidates need to be able to demonstrate a clear understanding of the role of a director and offer detailed suggestions as to the director's intentions and how these can be realised through the use of creative solutions.

Section C

Questions 12–14 *Devised work*

Question 12

This was a popular question and it offered candidates an opportunity to explore a range of acting skills and to evaluate how effective the skills were in communication to an audience. Examples included the contribution to the dramatic action; fluency in performance; the use of pace; use of gesture; contrast; interaction and relationships with others; characterisation; emotions; mood; dialogue; physicality; shape etc.

Many responses gave a superficial description of the character rather than focusing on the role. Better responses showed some understanding of the role in performance and were able to clearly communicate how it contributed to the overall drama and intention with practical examples of how the role was brought to life.

Generally speaking, almost all candidates were able to clearly state which was the most significant role and gave simplistic reasons for this. Many candidates then lost direction and provided a narrative of the devised piece without addressing the needs of the question. Some candidates were able to complement their answer with details about the specific character but were not able to state the role the character was to play and how decisions had been reached. In a number of cases it was not clear why the particular character had been chosen.

Very few candidates were able to offer any insight into how the role had been crafted and the contribution that it had made to the performance. Similarly very few responses responded in any detail to the evaluative nature of the question and therefore could not access the higher mark bands. Evaluative responses, in this and other similar questions, tended to be generalised by a one-sentence simplistic comment that stated whether it worked or not. To improve, candidates need to clearly communicate that the outcome was a result of careful planning and crafting. There should be comments on decisions that had been made and the

reasons for doing things in a particular way; ideally these are related to things that had gone well or badly and based on feedback received from others. Drama is primarily about the impact a performance has on its audience and consequently any evaluation should make reference to this. Where this was attempted, statements tended to be quite superficial, e.g. stating how the audience 'felt', and were not substantiated.

The best responses came from those who had gone through the process of developing and actually performing their piece to an audience. In those cases, it was possible for candidates to produce a perceptive evaluation of their performance with reference to its impact on the audience.

Question 13

This question produced a wider range of responses. Whilst most candidates recognised the meaning of 'impact' some identified only a general purpose or moral and very few linked this to any intention and therefore the impact seemed to happen accidentally. Again, many candidates lost direction and simply provided a narrative. Some were able to state clearly what they hoped to achieve and then fast forwarded to what was achieved as if it happened automatically without any reference to the decision-making or rehearsal process. Little consideration was given to how certain decisions might be arrived at or achieved. Most notably, candidates who attempted this question were not able to offer anything by means of an evaluation other than simplistic comments on whether it worked or not. Such questions should be backed up with objective reference to aspects of the piece that could have caused a reaction, possibly supplemented by feedback that was received during or after the rehearsal/performance process.

A large number of responses made no reference to audience at all.

Question 14

This was not a popular question. In some essays candidates appeared to have prepared general answers on lighting and did not apply their knowledge to the specifics of the question and their own devised piece. Others had little or no practical experience of lighting design and this, together with a lack of subject-specific terminology and knowledge of how lighting can be used to affect the drama, meant that they could not access the full range of marks.

Only a small minority of responses communicated the technical awareness and knowledge required. Some essays gave simplistic suggestions such as the use of spotlight or blackout, or superficial ideas such as red for danger. To improve, answers need to provide specific practical suggestions which clearly demonstrate how contrast is achieved through the use of lighting. Candidates are expected to go beyond the 'light/dark' approach and demonstrate how blends of lights and colours best achieve the desired effect.

DRAMA

Paper 0411/13
Written Examination

Key messages

- Candidates should read all the questions very carefully to ensure that they fully understand what is being asked, particularly where there is more than one element to the question.
- Candidates need to consider carefully which question to answer in **Sections B** and **C** and should not attempt a question if they do not have the technical knowledge required to answer it.
- Use the number of marks available as a guide to how much detail is needed in the answer. Many candidates continue to waste valuable time by providing extended answers to questions that are worth only 2 or 3 marks. Candidates may use bullet points where appropriate to respond to questions in **Section A**.
- Centres should engage practically with the stimuli provided in the pre-release material to enable candidates to show greater understanding of the challenges presented to them.
- In **Sections B** and **C** candidates should support their knowledge and understanding of dramatic concepts with practical examples of how these ideas can be applied in performance or detailed evaluation of the success and effectiveness of the piece in performance as appropriate to the question being asked.
- Literary or narrative approaches to answering questions must be avoided. For example, where questions ask the candidate to provide advice on how a dramatic role should be performed, it is not enough to recount the story or to provide detail of the character's personality, attitudes and relationships without making clear how the character should be heard and seen on stage in order to convey those traits.
- Candidates should be familiar with the dramatic and technical terms in current use. An extensive (but not exhaustive) glossary is provided in the syllabus to assist in the identification of key terms.

General comments

Generally candidates showed an improved understanding of the syllabus requirements and greater knowledge of the technical aspects of performance, with a noticeable improvement in the appropriate use of performing arts vocabulary. Fewer candidates were hampered by a lack of subject-specific knowledge.

The responses to the questions about the play extract displayed a wide range of ability. It was clear in many instances that the recommendation that the text be performed, at least informally, had been heeded. As all the questions on the play extract require candidates to demonstrate an understanding of how to transfer 'from page to stage', those who had practical experience of *Collaborators* were better able to respond from a practical perspective.

In answers to the questions on the devised work, while many candidates demonstrated the ability to link theory to practice, there was still too much narrative content. As always, candidates who planned their time and strategy carefully produced confident responses. Occasionally, there was a sense that practical work was insufficiently realised or inadequately developed. A few candidates appeared not to have completed all of the practical aspects of the syllabus and, in some cases, there was evidence that they needed to develop their understanding of key dramatic ideas. In questions relating to the devised work in particular, the strongest responses came from those candidates who had explored ideas fully in performance so that they had the opportunity to reflect critically on their own actual experience of creating drama – they were able to write about the *application* of creative ideas and be able to *evaluate* their effectiveness in performance.

There was a marked improvement in the way candidates approached the discussion of technical issues and less evidence of inadequate understanding of costume, lighting and set design in the theatre, all playing their part in the communication of dramatic meaning through sign and symbol. Yet there are still some areas where confusions lie, most notably in relation to props and set, its settings and furnishings. A chair, for example, is not a prop, it is part of the set, unless a character picks it up and uses it for a particular purpose – to jam a door shut, for example.

In a few cases the quality of candidates' handwriting gave cause for concern and Centres are requested to encourage their candidates to write legibly. Candidates whose work is illegible are self-penalising, since credit cannot be awarded to ideas that cannot be deciphered.

A few candidates attempted to answer all the questions in **Sections B** and **C** and in such cases marks were awarded to the answers which addressed the greatest number of assessment criteria. Naturally, because of the time required to produce a strong answer for a 25-mark question, such candidates were unlikely to score very highly.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Questions 1–5 *Collaborators*

Question 1

Most responses addressed the question successfully and gave appropriate costume suggestions. Marks could not be awarded when answers were unspecific e.g. 'An aristocratic costume' or where there was no statement in support of the costume choice. Period costume details were not essential but a few lost marks suggesting modern costume without appropriate justification. There were 2 marks available for this question and a correct answer in two simple sentences was sufficient to gain those marks. Some candidates wrote considerably more than was required and therefore spent a disproportionate amount of time on this question. Some candidates confused the gender of the character, perhaps because in their performance the character was played by a female. This is quite acceptable but candidates need to understand that such casting was through necessity or convenience.

Question 2

Candidates appeared to enjoy this question with most appreciating that there was the opportunity to focus upon the character of VLADIMIR himself as well as his portrayal of both Stalin and Bulgakov. The question asked for examples of facial expressions and/or gestures; answers which focused on vocal delivery or proxemics in a general sense could not be rewarded. Candidates were not requested to give reasons for their choices and no credit could be given for so doing.

Question 3

This question was generally well answered with the majority of candidates identifying and commenting on the DOCTOR's primary dramatic function as comic relief. Others were rewarded for showing how the motives and behaviour of the DOCTOR conformed to the surreal style and how the character served for political comment on the Soviet Union. Some credit was given for answers that interpreted the DOCTOR's contribution to the action in terms of physical responses and/or exposition – revealing the nature of the illness, for example.

Question 4

Most candidates understood YELENA's character and were able to offer a range of ideas on how to physicalise her relationships with the other characters. There was some confusion with proxemics and physical gesture and some others focused on vocal delivery for which marks could not be awarded. The most successful candidates were able to describe her subtextual motivations and how those could be conveyed through specific actions.

Question 5

This question was generally answered with some degree of success although few attained maximum marks. There were a range of answers that reflected candidates' sympathetic understanding of character with the best commenting on the dilemma BULGAKOV faced and how his internal struggle could be manifested. There were some examples of candidates writing a well-structured and focused character study without also exploring creative approaches to playing the character.

Questions 6–8 *Devised work*

Question 6

This question was not very well answered on the whole. In order to achieve high marks, candidates were required to provide evaluative commentary on the effectiveness of the ending and some did so by using performance intention and audience reaction as a basis for that discussion. Limited marks were available for responses that simply described the end of the piece and gave a basic comment on effectiveness. Lengthy descriptions of plot could not be rewarded.

Question 7

Candidates needed to fully understand the nature of a theatrical prop as an object that has a particular dramatic purpose when utilised by characters on the stage, and had to be able to discuss what potential there was for use of props within their piece, regardless of whether those items actually featured in the drama.

The best answers described the significance of the props for communicating complex dramatic meanings, through symbolic relevance or iconic significance, for example. Marks could not be awarded where there was no distinction between set, set dressing, furniture and props. Some candidates did attempt to discuss how these pieces of furniture/set could be manipulated and therefore, in essence, become props and were awarded accordingly, but others described pieces of set thinking that they were discussing props.

Question 8

Some candidates did not appear to be fully familiar with the concepts of 'pace' and 'action' in drama and theatre with many concentrating on the speed of different sequences of movement and physical action within the piece. Such descriptions generally provided limited insight into the pacing of the piece for dramatic effect. Whilst some credit could be given for answers where there was detailed justification given for that perspective, very few were able to connect the terms 'pace' and 'action' with spoken dialogue. Candidates who did so were able to discuss confidently the related terms of climax, tension and release and how these were achieved through dialogue.

Section B

Questions 9–11 *Collaborators*

Question 9

This was the least popular of the three questions in this section. There was a wide range of responses with some essays focusing on the play as a political satire with elements of Absurdism and occasions of surreal humour, and the best firmly placing this in the context of Soviet Russia. There were some limited discussions on how these messages may be realised practically despite sound theoretical knowledge. The question focused on how the central message might be communicated, and candidates needed to have a very good understanding of the role of director and the intended style.

The natural inclination seemed to be to focus on set, with some references to costume, sound and lighting. All such discussions were appropriate and credited as having significance as part of the directorial vision. The best used these aspects to support a primary focus on the direction of characters in the scenes as a means of realising directorial intention through performance. Responses that had missed the intent of the piece altogether, such as claiming it was to show STALIN as a benevolent leader or simply a figure of fun, could not be rewarded with high marks.

Question 10

This was the most popular choice with some excellent answers. These detailed responses displayed a comprehensive understanding of STALIN as historical figure and as dramatic character and how this necessarily shaped his portrayal in the play. Of particular note was the ability to select, with analytical skill, varying aspects of the character of STALIN and demonstrate clearly how these could be brought to life through performance. In such cases it was clear that candidates had engaged with the extract through practical workshops and performances. Some focused solely on character study and therefore neglected to offer insight into how the character should be played. As in **Question 9**, responses that tried to show

STALIN as a happy-go-lucky, benevolent character, loved by all had misunderstood the playwright's intention.

Question 11

This was a very popular choice. The fundamental challenge for the set designer is that the apartment has to function as a number of different locations with almost instant switching. There were some good answers with very exciting solutions where this challenge was clearly understood. Some weaker answers suggested the topic had not been thought about in practical terms, and ideas contradicted the initial discussion of layout etc. and other indications from the text. Others showed limited understanding of the role of the set designer and tried to merge with disparate thoughts on lighting, costume, make-up and sound design. Some focused entirely on lighting and, although very important for the changes in location, some definition was still needed beyond a change in mood or atmosphere or 'symbol' alone. The best answers were able to demonstrate the matching of creative drive and design potential with the practicalities of realisation without the use of overly complex ideas and in ways that clearly supported the drama.

Section C

Questions 12–14 *Devised work*

Question 12

This was a fairly popular question but was not very well answered on the whole. Very few candidates were able to progress beyond generalised discussion and even when the purpose and style of the piece was evaluated there were few examples of actual dialogue to support the points. The best essays focused on how different modes of dialogue reflected character, how they contributed to the building of dramatic tension and plot development and provided specific examples of the dialogue to illustrate these. Many seemed to think that discussing the pace and tone of the dialogue was enough and often the outcome was a repeat of **Question 8**. Few really appeared to understand the function of dialogue and several seemed to have created a piece that relied more on physical theatre/mime. Such responses could be rewarded where there was discussion of movement, physicality and proxemics as a form of dialogue or as a means of communication between performers and their audience and where there was complete understanding of the fact that the silences and pauses in speech are as significant as the words that are spoken.

Question 13

This was a popular choice, but often answered in a superficial way with no real discussion of artistic reasoning behind choices. Better answers provided a detailed discussion of the ways in which the costume and make-up reflected the nature of character/role and its purpose in relation to the plot/action of the characters. Selected references to moments in the devised piece were rare but did help to crystallize the effect of the visual aspects of the scene when detail allowed. Many candidates were able to explore potential use of costume/make-up even if their actual final piece contained neither. There were some excellent design concepts supported by some informative diagrams (there were occasions, however, where the diagrams were tacked on at the end and were not labelled). Often the make-up element of this question was not addressed or, again, tacked on the end, and therefore, little credit could be given.

Question 14

This was a fairly popular choice and there were many creative answers with a lot of candidates able to discuss the actual piece and then eloquently discuss creative potential for refinement/development. Some answers provided some excellent critical evaluation of what did not work or was received by the audience in a way not intended and in these instances it was clear that candidates had learned from the experience. A number of responses did not go beyond costume, setting and layout and sound and lighting as means of communicating their vision to an audience. Therefore, the actual performance itself in relation to effect was too often glossed over and not backed up enough with examples. Consequently, such answers were lacking in detailed evaluative comment of how the ideas worked in performance and could not be highly rewarded.

DRAMA

Paper 0411/02
Coursework

General comments

There was a rich diversity in the practical work submitted this series and many candidates displayed high levels of enthusiasm and commitment in their performances. There were relatively few instances of disengaged candidates: even where performances revealed only modest levels of skills and technique, candidates were often able to show their passion for drama.

Administration

1 Timely dispatch of the moderation materials

Almost all submissions were received on time in Cambridge, which enabled the moderation process to run smoothly.

2 Documentation

In a small number of cases the moderation process was delayed owing to incomplete documentation being sent with the recordings. Centres are requested to check that they have included all of the following when they submit their materials to Cambridge:

- the Internal Assessment MS1 mark sheet or a signed printout of the marks file if marks were submitted to Cambridge electronically;
- the Individual Candidate Mark Sheets (ICMSs) for each candidate, including those who are not in the sample;
- the running order of performances on the DVD.

3 Selecting the sample

Several Centres sent the work of all candidates, rather than the sample of six that was required. This delayed the moderation process as Moderators had to first select an appropriate sample. In other instances the sample did not provide adequate coverage of the marks awarded: either the highest or lowest marked candidates were not included, or the sample was bunched around certain marks, leaving other mark ranges unrepresented.

4 Accuracy of mark sheets

There were fewer arithmetical errors this series, and there was some improvement in the accuracy of the transcription of marks from the ICMSs to the MS1 mark sheet or to computer if marks were submitted electronically. The most common arithmetical errors were caused by rounding marks up or down for the assessment objectives, rather than leaving them as decimal fractions until calculating the final mark (although this will no longer be a problem when the syllabus changes in 2015 and the marks will simply need to be added up).

5 Quality of recordings

Most DVDs played without any problems, although there were a number that would not work either in a computer (Mac or PC) or a DVD player. To ensure compatibility, all recordings submitted on DVD must be in either MPEG (.mpg) or QuickTime movie (.mov) format.

There was an improvement in the quality of the recordings, although the sound quality was not always of a comparable standard to the picture, a disparity especially noticeable in outdoor performances.

Sound quality was sometimes a problem even with indoor pieces as the camera had been placed too far from the stage. If the camera has to be placed at a distance away from the performance, it is recommended that an additional external microphone is attached to the camera and placed closer to the performers in order to ensure a good-quality audio recording.

Not all candidates introduced themselves before each performance, and in some cases this made it difficult for Moderators to identify performers. Some Centres provided just one introduction as a separate chapter on the DVD, which was of limited value, as it required intricate navigation around the title menu for each performance. Centres are also reminded to include on each ICMS a simple description of what each candidate is wearing in each performance. Photographs are not specifically required but Moderators were grateful in cases where Centres had provided them.

Assessment criteria

There was evidence of good application of the assessment criteria. However, in some cases there was confusion between the marks awarded for Assessment Objectives A and B, which are largely concerned with the quality of the performance ideas and interpretation, and Assessment Objective C, which is focused on the quality of the candidates' acting skills in the performance itself.

Text-based performances

Most candidates achieved their best results in the text-based work.

There were a number of emotionally charged performances, which clearly engaged their audiences in live performance, and also communicated well through the recordings. The strongest work was well presented and had a good sense of stagecraft, discipline and performance focus, often demonstrating an excellent understanding of character, thematic content and context. These candidates were highly successful in bringing their role to life, and establishing a sense of context in which multi-dimensional, complex characters interacted with each other.

However, many candidates demonstrated variable success in inhabiting their chosen character and some were prone to overacting, especially at points of exalted language. The overwhelming majority of candidates had taken considerable trouble to learn their lines, and there were hardly any who broke down in performance. Mid-range performances frequently gave the impression of going through the motions on stage: lines had been learned, consideration had been given to the requirements of the setting and relationships between the characters, but the performance itself lacked self-belief, or a sense they were acting out the role of an authentic character whose words were intended to provoke a strong reaction from other characters. The weakest performances were frequently one-dimensional, with lines being delivered at another character rather than with any meaningful sense of creating dialogue.

As reported in previous series, a number of candidates demonstrated constrained physicality in their performances. The use of furniture was often a hindrance, especially in monologues where candidates were seated for the whole piece. Several weaker performances consisted of what was essentially a 'talk' seated on a chair or behind a table. Whilst this may be a suitable approach for a professional actor, it did not always serve candidates well as static monologues tended to work against the drama of the piece. Furniture was not always the cause of the problem and some of those who were standing were sometimes immobile, whilst others delivered their pieces seated on the floor, seemingly overwhelmed by self-hugging angst with knees clutched tightly to their chest. Some static monologues were filmed from the waist up, which exacerbated their lack of physicality.

The most engaging performances demonstrated a strong awareness of historical, social and cultural awareness. Extracts from plays with an historical theme were often well crafted, with a strong sense of time and place reinforced through a careful consideration of location, setting, costume and use of space. Some candidates chose plays from their own country or region and this often gave them a closer affinity with the subject matter and context. Some of the weakest performances consisted of attempts to perform culturally specific contemporary UK drama, which relied on regional British accents and an understanding of references far removed from the location in which the performances took place.

Although there is no requirement to create elaborate costumes, some candidates often wore clothing that conflicted with the role they were trying to establish. The results were occasionally jarring: Tudor kings wearing brightly coloured tee shirts; French farces with characters dressed in denim; Shakespearean

characters wearing baseball caps. In cases where candidates are uncertain about what to wear, theatre 'blacks' are advisable rather than everyday clothes or school uniforms.

The cutting of the extract proved challenging in group pieces, and a number of groups would have benefited from a more careful consideration of the playwright's intention at the beginning and end of their extract. For example, some candidates had chosen to begin their extract at a moment of high dudgeon, such as a single scream, a stabbing, an argument or a chase. Whilst that guaranteed a powerful opening to the performance, it was sometimes difficult to sustain the intensity of the moment. The most able candidates were able to create contrasting pacing but less skilled performers often mistook volume for intensity, meaning that once the screaming was over, the drama quickly evaporated.

Centres had generally selected an interesting and varied range of repertoire. The vast majority of this was appropriate, although in cases where monologues were taken from more obscure plays, possibly found on the internet, candidates were often unable to demonstrate knowledge of the character they were trying to build. In some instances, the monologue was a freestanding piece of text, perhaps intended for an audition piece, and therefore inappropriate for use in IGCSE Drama. There were fewer examples this series of candidates presenting extracts from screenplays, which are not permitted by the syllabus.

Centres may find it helpful to consider the following representative list of repertoire from which extracts were selected in the 2014 series.

Alan Ayckbourn	<i>A Small Family Business</i> <i>Confusions</i> <i>Invisible Friends</i>
Samuel Beckett	<i>Waiting for Godot</i>
Bertolt Brecht	<i>The Caucasian Chalk Circle</i>
David Campton	<i>The Cagebirds</i>
Anton Chekhov	<i>The Cherry Orchard</i> <i>Three Sisters</i>
Caryl Churchill	<i>Top Girls</i>
Noël Coward	<i>Private Lives</i>
Gabriel Davis	<i>Goodbye Charles</i>
Floyd Dell	<i>Enigma</i>
Christopher Durang	<i>Laughing Wild</i>
Euripides	<i>The Trojan Women</i>
Dario Fo	<i>Accidental Death of an Anarchist</i>
Athol Fugard	<i>No Good Friday</i>
John Galsworthy	<i>Strife</i>
Lucy Gannon	<i>Keeping Tom Nice</i>
Nikolai Gogol	<i>The Government Inspector</i>
John Godber	<i>Bouncers</i> <i>Shakers</i> <i>Teechers</i>
Katori Hall	<i>The Mountaintop</i>
Lorraine Hansberry	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>
Gerhart Hauptmann	<i>Before Dawn</i>
Henrik Ibsen	<i>A Doll's House</i>
Moisés Kaufman	<i>The Laramie Project</i>
Charlotte Keatley	<i>My Mother Said I Never Should</i>
Dennis Kelly	<i>DNA</i>
Lyle Kessler	<i>Orphans</i>
Federico Garcia Lorca	<i>Blood Wedding</i>
Emmett Loverde	<i>Beauty, Brains and Personality</i>
Sharman Macdonald	<i>After Juliet</i>
David Mamet	<i>Glengarry Glen Ross</i>

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Christopher Marlowe	<i>Doctor Faustus</i>
Jason D Martin	<i>Endangered Species</i>
Arthur Miller	<i>All My Sons</i> <i>The Crucible</i> <i>Death of a Salesman</i> <i>A View from the Bridge</i>
Molière	<i>Tartuffe</i>
John Osborne	<i>Luther</i>
Joe Penhall	<i>Some Voices</i>
J B Priestley	<i>An Inspector Calls</i>
Terence Rattigan	<i>The Winslow Boy</i>
Yasmina Reza	<i>Art</i>
Romain Rolland	<i>The Fourteenth of July</i>
Willy Russell	<i>Blood Brothers</i> <i>Educating Rita</i>
William Shakespeare	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i> <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> <i>Hamlet</i> <i>Julius Caesar</i> <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> <i>Troilus and Cressida</i>
Neil Simon	<i>The Prisoner of Second Avenue</i>
Sophocles	<i>Antigone</i>
August Strindberg	<i>Easter</i> <i>The Ghost Sonata</i>
Tom Stoppard	<i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead</i>
John Webster	<i>The Duchess of Malfi</i>
Oscar Wilde	<i>An Ideal Husband</i> <i>A Woman of No Importance</i> <i>Salome</i> <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>
Keith Waterhouse	<i>Billy Liar</i>
Tennessee Williams	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> <i>The Glass Menagerie</i>

Devised performances

Although the overall standard of devised work improved a little this series, it was generally of a lower standard than the text-based work. It was very clear where candidates had been genuinely excited about their performance work and researched it in detail as it generally resulted in compelling drama. Some of the scripting was of a very high standard, demonstrating mature writing with some excellent characterisation. However, much of the drama seen was contrived or shallow, exploring obvious issues such as teenage pregnancy or drugs without any sense of shape or communication of a clear message. Dialogue was seldom well constructed and music was often introduced to create mood to inject life into otherwise mundane performance work. As in previous series, candidates focusing on Naturalism often ended up trapped in weaker soap-opera-style performances.

This notwithstanding, there were a number of powerful pieces where intensity was created through an abstract approach, often using the ensemble to good effect through fluid and variable physicality. In such pieces, functional dialogue was often given less priority than dramatic repetition, choral speaking, proxemics and physical interactions, often resulting in a skilfully crafted piece that dealt with complex issues in a sensitive manner rather than relying on tried-and-tested approaches. There were several examples of non-narrative elements being successfully incorporated into devised work, such as through music, the use of a narrator or the incorporation of mime.

Many candidates struggled with how to stage their dramatic ideas. There were many mid-band performances where the dramatic concept was far stronger than its execution. Some performances relied heavily on chairs and tables or a sofa, which restricted the physicality of the performance, anchoring the performers to a fixed point on stage. In many pieces, the content of the piece dominated the candidates' understanding of the drama they were trying to create. This was often expressed in a manner commonly used in television and film acting, but which is seldom successful on the stage. Meaningful or aggressive stares, muttered threats or hushed undertones can create impact on the screen but on stage are too far distant from the audience to be meaningful or even noticeable. Some of the devised work appeared to have been created for performance to camera rather than to be performed on stage.