

DRAMA

Paper 9482/11
Open-Book Written Examination

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

DRAMA

Paper 9482/12 Open-Book Written Examination 12

General comments

Key messages

This is now a well-established syllabus, and Examiners saw many well-prepared candidates achieving their potential by taking careful note of the demands of their chosen questions and striving to focus explicitly on those demands in their answers.

The very best answers were always those that answered the question, as set, as opposed to 'as hoped for', and which supported imaginative practical ideas with useful reference to the text using apt, pithy quotations.

Candidates appear to have benefitted from approaching their texts from a practical point of view, in class. Those who have also seen different productions of their set plays – either live or streamed – also seemed to have benefitted from seeing how a text is brought to life in the theatre.

It is disappointing, however, to have to report that some candidates imported the ideas of professional directors into their own answers, without acknowledgement. Others acknowledged the source of their ideas but were unable to explain, for example, how or why the ideas/moments from the professional production(s), that they were 'mining' for ideas, were appropriate to meet the specific demands of their chosen question.

Nevertheless, it was clear that candidates who have experience of going to the theatre, or of watching professional productions 'on-line', were far better equipped to tackle the practical demands of the questions on this paper than those whose experience of real theatre was limited.

Most questions attracted answers reflecting the complete range of achievement. Sadly, there were instances where candidates appeared unprepared to write 'as a performer', 'as a director', or 'as a designer', which is a fundamental requirement of each of the questions on the paper. The majority of candidates did approach the tasks set, in their chosen question option, in a practical way, and wrote from the designated perspective, but there were still a considerable number of answers seen that suggested that their selected text had been studied in a more literary way and, therefore, they wrote their answer in a 'literary' fashion.

In **Section A**, there were still examples of candidates' answers that either ignored the parameters of the prescribed section or which attempted to cover the entire play. Candidates should be reminded that, in **Section A**, material that does not relate specifically to the prescribed lines – and the prescribed character or specified mood/atmosphere – will attract no credit.

In **Section B**, the majority of candidates gave careful consideration to selecting the most appropriate sections of the play to serve the focus of the chosen question, while others appear to have given inadequate attention to these choices.

Candidates who chose to respond to the design-based questions frequently appeared to be aware that they should support their design ideas with appropriately sized and labelled sketches. These sketches often helped Examiners to understand the candidates' vision in a more economical way than through descriptive writing. Some candidates did not provide sketches to support their designs, nor were their descriptions detailed enough in themselves to clarify their ideas for the Examiner.

The SGC element of responses was generally improved on what was seen in previous series. Many candidates seemed to have recognised that, while implicit understanding of performance style, for example, is credited as part of the SGC mark, explicit relevant reference to the play's genre, style or context that is made relevant to the question focus is also useful to include to fulfil this demand of the syllabus.

When candidates presented 'blocks' of 'pre-prepared' SGC information that was not related in any way to the focus of the question, their answers were diluted rather than being strengthened by such material, however.

In stronger answers, candidates were able to tailor their SGC knowledge to match the precise demands of the question and/or of the extract set, in **Section A**.

Questions in **Section A** always demand that candidates illustrate their answers with reference to 'particular moments' from the extract, while question in **Section B** specify the number of sections required to support candidates' discussion of the question task. Most, but not all, candidates met these stated requirements in each section; those who disregarded the guidance or misinterpreted the precise demands of the question – offering fewer or more than the stipulated number of 'moments' or 'sections', in their answers – unfortunately missed out on marks available for 'precision' and 'relevance'.

Candidates generally responded well to a range of questions in this November series. The most popular texts were *A View from the Bridge* and *Small Island* in **Section A** and *Oedipus Rex* and *Blood Wedding* in **Section B**.

Section A

Question 1

As You Like it

- (a) Only a handful of answers was seen based on *As You Like It* and all of these candidates chose to answer **Question 1a**.

Rosalind's excitement about her mysterious admirer in the Forest of Arden was reasonably well understood, but answers tended to be quite unimaginative in presenting ideas for how her excitement was to be communicated.

Some candidates introduced their responses with a brief outline of the 'plot so far', which was not making good use of the limited time available to answer each question.

Better candidates always kept the question focus at the forefront of their answers and concentrated on Rosalind's sense of intrigue about the author of the verses written in her honour. They focused on Rosalind's delivery of her lines and on the physical expression of her impatience to know the identity of her admirer. The 'quick-fire' nature of her entreaties, and her physical interaction with Celia, whilst pressing her for information, was sometimes discussed.

Some candidates commented on Rosalind's sudden attack of 'feminine giddiness' once she realises that Orlando is the author of the verses and she bombards Celia with a barrage of questions.

Better answers used the text well to convey the nature of Rosalind's boundless curiosity as she reveals her amorous feelings for the young wrestler who has captured her heart.

Weaker answers did not quote at all from the extract but offered a narrative of its events.

- (b) This option was not selected by sufficient candidates to make any meaningful comment on achievement.

SCG

Candidates who commented on the comic or pastoral style of the play and of Rosalind's comical, yet largely naturalistic performance here, were more successful than those who offered a potted history of Shakespeare's theatrical career or discussed the sumptuary laws or Elizabethan beliefs about the 'four humours'; neither of which were made relevant to the answers.

Question 3

A View from the Bridge

This was by far the most popular **Section A** text. However, while many candidates demonstrated that they knew the text well, and appeared to be enthusiastic about it, they did not always answer the precise focus of the question.

- (a) No answers to this design question were seen.
- (b) This was a popular question, but several candidates wrote about a different section of Act 1 or wrote in a disjointed way about separate fragments of the nominated extract.

Especially detrimental to candidates' success, in their answers to **Question 3b**, was a failure to notice or to address the requirement to consider the various tensions within the family – which was the focus of the question.

Where candidates did focus on tension, they tended to highlight Beatrice's blunt announcement of Catherine's job that seems to catch Eddie 'off guard', resulting in his repeated insistence that Catherine finish school. They noted Eddie's fairly blatant desperation to prevent Catherine from 'growing up' and moving away from him.

There was some sensitive interpretation of Eddie's increasing nervousness as he learns about the details of Catherine's 'job' offer and its location. Candidates offered some useful direction for the creation of tension as Beatrice and Eddie bicker about the job and about Catherine's need for independence, upsetting Catherine.

Some candidates focused on Beatrice's accusations about Eddie's motives and offered some subtle performance detail for each of the characters.

While many candidates used their knowledge of later events in the play to inform some slightly unlikely directions of Eddie's physical interaction with Catherine, better answers focused on the friction between Eddie and Beatrice that is more overt and they considered how Eddie's snappy retort to Beatrice that she has 'never worked in her life' creates a tense mood and upsets both of the women in the scene.

In strong answers, candidates noted the brief release of tension as the family discuss the size of the spiders that come off the ships, before Eddie ramps up the tension again while forbidding Catherine and Beatrice from speaking to anyone about the arrival of 'the cousins'.

Weaker answers failed to mention tension at all, or if they did, they suggested emulating Ivo Von Hove's use of sound and lighting to create tension, rather than relying on their own directorial ideas for the extract.

SGC

Candidates often aired their explicit knowledge of the American context and the period setting of the play. Some relevant points were made about the importance of family to the Italian community. The situation regarding illegal immigrants was also sometimes alluded to.

Question 5

Small Island

This text continues to grow in popularity.

- (a) This was the more popular option. A number of excellent answers were seen where candidates appreciated that the task set in this question is to 'create tension'.

Too many candidates read the question carelessly and they focused their attention on Bernard's character and his aggressiveness rather than exploring the ways in which Bernard's behaviour stoked the rising tension on stage.

In some of these answers, the focus was exclusively on Bernard which meant that many of the tense exchanges between Bernard and Gilbert, and Hortense's outraged response to Bernard's undisguised bigotry, received no attention at all.

In better answers, candidates explored, for example, the tension created when Gilbert and Hortense discover Bernard in their space and when Hortense challenges him. Bernard's rude replies were examined and his patronising language and derogatory manner with the tenants was seen as raising the tension, which further escalates when Gilbert suddenly 'lunges at' Bernard.

Some candidates explored the physical aspects of the confrontation; others explored the exchange of verbal 'hostilities'. In stronger work, both aspects were considered.

- (b) This was the less popular option and answers tended to be less well executed. Partly, this seemed to be because candidates focused exclusively on Queenie's pregnancy, on her labour pains and on portraying her symptoms of pain. Her fiery temperament, intolerance of Bernard, and desperation for help from Hortense were rarely acknowledged.

Where candidates gave any attention at all to their intended response to the character of Queenie, it was invariably sympathy for her pain with limited attention paid to their response to Queenie's concealment of the pregnancy, to Queenie's exhaustion caused by Bernard's blatant racism and his general 'stupidity', to her instinctive kindness towards Gilbert and Hortense, and to Queenie's evident sympathy with them, as she is carrying the child of one of their countrymen.

In most answers, therefore, Queenie's physical struggles were described, as she huffed and puffed and staggered around the space. Very occasionally, a candidate expressed the audience's potential anxiety for Queenie's safety once the baby was born and its colour discovered by Bernard.

SGC

This question gave rise to many prepared answers which focused on the time period, the Windrush generation, generally, and the prejudice which existed. Some made these ideas relevant to the content of the scene.

Some candidates also mentioned the play's unusual mix of theatrical styles and how Queenie's character often served to lighten the mood even at a time like this.

SECTION B

Question 6

Oedipus Rex

- (a) A handful of answers to this question were seen.

In better answers, candidates began by explaining the dramatic effects they wished to create through their costume designs.

These effects frequently comprised: signaling Jocasta's status as 'Queen' and, occasionally, indicating her maturity, relative to Oedipus.

In suggestions for costuming the Chorus, candidates aimed to create a sense of homogeneity or to express their status as Councilors.

When considering costume and accessories for Tiresias, candidates often referred to rousing the audience's fascination in the potential 'mystical' powers of Tiresias, as well as conveying his physical blindness to the audience.

Unfortunately, among candidates who chose to write about the Chorus there was a fairly widespread confusion between the Chorus and the poor and sickly 'Citizens of Thebes'. This mistake was costly in terms of candidates' achievement when they dressed the elite Chorus as scruffy beggars.

The most successful answers revealed good knowledge of what would have been worn in Ancient Greece, and they referred confidently to individual garments, using the authentic terms such as 'Chiton', 'Himation', 'Chlamys'. Some, mistakenly, referred to Roman 'togas', or they simply used terms such as 'tunics' and 'cloaks'.

All appeared to have opted for authentic classical Greek costuming – this was often only implied in the answer- whether they were able to use the appropriate terminology or not.

In stronger answers, candidates also considered the cut, fit and condition of the chosen costume, in addition to colour and fabric. Most made some reference to footwear and headgear; one candidate cited the use of a 'tiara' for Jocasta.

There was some discussion of the use of masks.

- (b) The focus on this performer's question was on Tiresias, but the specific demand was the demonstration of his 'initial reluctance to reveal his knowledge of the truth and his later defiance when forced to speak'.

There were too few responses to the question to make meaningful comment beyond the fact that these candidates did not focus in sufficient detail on the terms of the question but offered a brief description of Tiresias, noting his blindness and powers as a prophet.

In several, less successful responses, candidates simply wrote a 'character study' type answer on Tiresias, paying little regard to how his role would be performed.

SGC

Candidates tended to confine their comments to dramatic conventions of Ancient Greek theatre. Occasionally this was informed by a secure knowledge and understanding of staging conventions.

Often, marks for the understanding of style were derived from the demonstration of an understanding of the nature of the tragic form, and adherence to an appropriate delivery style of quoted text.

Question 7

The Government Inspector

This was a minority choice.

Candidates should be studying a translation of Gogol's play and not a 'free adaptation' of the play.

- (a) This option was not selected by sufficient candidates to make much meaningful comment on their achievement.

Khlestakov's character was generally understood to be that of a cunning and calculating young man with no care for anyone but himself.

Answers generally lacked comic invention and candidates missed opportunities to demonstrate the contrast between the 'real' Khlestakov, that the audience see when Khlestakov is 'alone' with Osip, and the 'fabricated' Khlestakov, enjoying the attentions of the Mayor and his family.

- (b) No answers were seen on this option.

SCG

The social context of the play appeared to have been broadly understood. Candidates made reference to the play's comic style, or they offered some comical moments in their depiction of Khlestakov.

Question 8

The Cherry Orchard

- (a) This option was not selected by sufficient candidates to make much meaningful comment on their achievement.

Varya's situation in the household was understood and a sympathetic response to her character was generally implied. Text was used occasionally to support performance ideas.

- (b) This option was not selected by sufficient candidates to make any meaningful comment on their achievement.

SGC

The feudal situation that existed in Russia prior to the events of the play was mentioned. Candidates referred to the 'soon to be dismantled' class system, but there was little by the way of purposeful application of SGC knowledge in the very few answers seen on *The Cherry Orchard*, in this series.

Question 9

Blood Wedding

This is the most popular play in **Section B**, and the full range of achievement was seen.

- (a) Most candidates included the opening scene between The Bridegroom and his Mother, and the relationship appeared to be understood by the majority of candidates.

Most noted the fact that the mother/son relationship, as depicted by Lorca, is quite typical of inter-generational relationships, when Lorca was writing, and some referred to the relationship being especially typical of cultural expectations in Spain in the 1930's.

Candidates explored the Bridegroom's weariness of his mother's obsession with knives, and his expressions of frustration with her. In stronger answers, Bridegroom's affection for his Mother was shown through ideas about the Bridegroom teasing his mother. Most offered directions to indicate that Mother responds quite positively to his teasing and took this as a sign of strong affection between them. There were some vivid imaginings of the moment when Bridegroom lifts his Mother in his arms.

In stronger answers, there was good focus on revealing the relationship between Mother and Bridegroom, but other candidates often wrote aimlessly about the scenes that they selected and paid limited attention to the relationship.

Some considered the Mother's interaction with the Bride and her Father during the 'betrothal' visit, for example, in a generalised way, while, in stronger answers they focused on Mother's pride in her son and his modesty.

Others wrote about the interaction between Bridegroom and his mother at the wedding but did not discuss their relationship so much as considering the Mother's apparent fear of disharmony in Bridegroom's future with the Bride.

In better answers, candidates explored the Bridegroom's promise to always follow his Mother's advice.

Once the disappearance of the Bride comes to light, most candidates observed that Mother and Bridegroom are united in their determination to track the lovers down.

- (b) This question was often well answered. Most candidates understood the Servant's close relationship with the Bride.

As is so often remarked upon, some candidates read the question carelessly, and they appeared not to have noticed that the question focus required consideration of the Servant's attitude towards the Bride.

Others did not adhere to the further requirement of the question that they refer to 'two separate sections'. This meant that some candidates wrote about a single section, while others wrote about three sections.

Candidates need to be reminded that if they fail to fulfil each particular requirement of the question in their answers, their achievement will be diminished, however well they appear to 'know the play' or 'understand the character' that they are writing about.

Where candidates did respond appropriately to the question, most noted the Servant's friendly and motherly attitudes towards the Bride after the visit of Mother and Bridegroom as she attempts to coax Bride into looking at the presents.

Some commented on the Servant's reproachful attitude towards the Bride when discussing the clandestine visits of Leonardo, while most remarked on her protectiveness towards the Bride in Leonardo's presence.

In some answers, candidates interpreted as downright jealousy the Servant's somewhat risqué expression of envy towards the Bride for having a husband to look forward to loving, others saw this as playfulness and suggested a bitterness in her attitude towards the Bride. Most candidates commented on the Servant's affectionate and supportive attitude towards the Bride after the wedding, as she tries to encourage the Bride, who is clearly not happy.

SGC

Many candidates wrote paragraphs about Lorca's personal life which were not helpful nor made relevant to their answers.

Others made more relevant comments on Spanish culture and religious beliefs.

Some candidates, as reported in previous series, included rather too much material relating to the origin of the play – the newspaper report of the elopement of a bride with another man at her wedding. While it is valid to allude to this source, some candidates discussed it at length and at the expense of making other cultural links. In some responses, candidates betrayed a lack of understanding of the culture by having the Bridegroom's mother enjoying a plate of 'bacon and eggs' in the opening scene.

DRAMA

Paper 9482/13 Open-Book Written Examination 13

General comments

Key messages

This is now a well-established syllabus, and Examiners saw many well-prepared candidates achieving their potential by taking careful note of the demands of their chosen questions and striving to focus explicitly on those demands in their answers.

The very best answers were always those that answered the question, as set, as opposed to 'as hoped for', and which supported imaginative practical ideas with useful reference to the text using apt, pithy quotations.

Candidates appear to have benefitted from approaching their texts from a practical point of view, in class. Those who have also seen different productions of their set plays – either live or streamed – also seemed to have benefitted from seeing how a text is brought to life in the theatre.

It is disappointing, however, to have to report that some candidates imported the ideas of professional directors into their own answers, without acknowledgement. Others acknowledged the source of their ideas but were unable to explain, for example, how or why the ideas/moments from the professional production(s), that they were 'mining' for ideas, were appropriate to meet the specific demands of their chosen question.

Nevertheless, it was clear that candidates who have experience of going to the theatre, or of watching professional productions 'on-line', were far better equipped to tackle the practical demands of the questions on this paper than those whose experience of real theatre was limited.

Most questions attracted answers reflecting the complete range of achievement. Sadly, there were instances where candidates appeared unprepared to write 'as a performer', 'as a director', or 'as a designer', which is a fundamental requirement of each of the questions on the paper. The majority of candidates did approach the tasks set, in their chosen question option, in a practical way, and wrote from the designated perspective, but there were still a considerable number of answers seen that suggested that their selected text had been studied in a more literary way and, therefore, they wrote their answer in a 'literary' fashion.

In **Section A**, there were still examples of candidates' answers that either ignored the parameters of the prescribed section or which attempted to cover the entire play. Candidates should be reminded that, in **Section A**, material that does not relate specifically to the prescribed lines – and the prescribed character or specified mood/atmosphere – will attract no credit.

In **Section B**, the majority of candidates gave careful consideration to selecting the most appropriate sections of the play to serve the focus of the chosen question, while others appear to have given inadequate attention to these choices.

Candidates who chose to respond to the design-based questions frequently appeared to be aware that they should support their design ideas with appropriately sized and labelled sketches. These sketches often helped Examiners to understand the candidates' vision in a more economical way than through descriptive writing. Some candidates did not provide sketches to support their designs, nor were their descriptions detailed enough in themselves to clarify their ideas for the Examiner.

The SGC element of responses was generally improved on what was seen in previous series. Many candidates seemed to have recognised that, while implicit understanding of performance style, for example, is credited as part of the SGC mark, explicit relevant reference to the play's genre, style or context that is made relevant to the question focus is also useful to include to fulfil this demand of the syllabus.

When candidates presented 'blocks' of 'pre-prepared' SGC information that was not related in any way to the focus of the question, their answers were diluted rather than being strengthened by such material, however.

In stronger answers, candidates were able to tailor their SGC knowledge to match the precise demands of the question and/or of the extract set, in **Section A**.

Questions in **Section A** always demand that candidates illustrate their answers with reference to 'particular moments' from the extract, while question in **Section B** specify the number of sections required to support candidates' discussion of the question task. Most, but not all, candidates met these stated requirements in each section; those who disregarded the guidance or misinterpreted the precise demands of the question – offering fewer or more than the stipulated number of 'moments' or 'sections' in their answers – unfortunately missed out on marks available for 'precision' and 'relevance'.

Candidates generally responded well to a range of questions in this November series. The most popular texts were *A View from the Bridge* and *As You Like It* in **Section A** and *Oedipus Rex* and *Blood Wedding* in **Section B**.

Section A

Question 1

As You Like it

- (a) No responses were seen to this question on design.
- (b) Only a handful of answers was seen based on *As You Like It* and all of these candidates chose to answer **Question 1b**.

Candidates tended to narrate the events of the given extract rather than to direct the interaction between Rosalind and Orlando to create intended effects for the audience.

Where effects were identified, or implied, candidates appeared to be aiming for the audience to be amused by the situational comedy of Orlando wooing the 'real' Rosalind whom he thinks to be Ganymede.

There were one or two comments made that implied that candidates thought the scene to be potentially romantic, given Orlando's sincere feelings for Rosalind, but these feelings were not particularly well realised through candidates' performance suggestions for the actor.

Rosalind's capriciousness and self-deprecating humour were occasionally alluded to, if not actually achieved through meaningful direction.

Weaker answer did not quote at all from the extract.

SCG

Candidates who commented on the comic or pastoral style of the play and of Rosalind's comical, yet largely naturalistic, performance, and Orlando's comic blindness to the true identity of 'Ganymede', were more successful than those who offered a potted history of Shakespeare's theatrical career or discussed the sumptuary laws or Elizabethan beliefs about the 'four humours'; neither of which were made relevant to the answers.

Question 2

The Rivals

Too few responses on *The Rivals* were seen to draw any meaningful conclusions about candidate achievement.

Question 3

A View from the Bridge

This was by far the most popular **Section A** text. However, while many candidates demonstrated that they knew the text well, and appeared to be enthusiastic about it, they did not always answer the precise focus of the question.

- (a) This was a popular question, but several candidates wrote about a different section of Act 1 or wrote in a disjointed way about separate fragments of the nominated extract.

Especially detrimental to candidates' success in their answers to **Question 3b**, was a failure to notice or to address the requirement to adopt the perspective of a director and to create tension from the growing friction between Eddie and the cousins.

Where candidates did focus on tension, they tended to consider the final section of the extract that ends with Marco lifting the chair high above Eddie's head.

In stronger answers, candidates considered the building of tension in the scene. They referred, for example, to Eddie's challenge to Marco about why the cousins came to America, causing an awkward pause in the conversation. They directed Catherine, 'flushed with revolt', as she invites Rodolpho to dance, causing Eddie to 'freeze' and tension to build.

In good answers, candidates included Beatrice's attempt to diffuse the tension with 'small talk' which backfires as it triggers Eddie's contempt for Rodolpho, 'a man who can cook, sing and make dresses'.

Some candidates referred to Eddie's inner explosion of jealousy as he twists and rips the newspaper before hatching his plan to 'trap' Rodolpho, offering to teach him 'boxing'.

A very few directed Beatrice's encouragement of Rodolpho to let Eddie 'teach' him how to box, but this showed an understanding of Miller's craft, as everyone on stage – except Eddie – is surprised when Eddie thumps his 'rival'.

Most stronger answers included the aftermath of the 'bout', focusing on Rodolpho initiating a slow dance with Catherine and Marco's challenge of Eddie to lift the chair.

In less focused answers, candidates failed to mention tension at all, or they suggested replicating Ivo Von Hove's use of sound and lighting to create tension, rather than relying on their own directorial ideas for this specific extract.

- (b) This question attracted fewer responses, but where candidates appreciated that an interpretation of Rodolpho was required, and they supplied an interpretation supported with useful practical examples of how they would perform the role, they were successful.

Most candidates noted that in this extract, Rodolpho appears deferential towards Eddie, and he appears modest, but gratified, when Marco praises his cooking. He shows some naivety in accepting Eddie's invitation to watch the boxing and then to allow himself to be drawn into Eddie's 'trap'. Once Eddie has hit him, candidates appreciated that Rodolpho 'sees the light' and understands the threat that Eddie is making.

Rodolpho's invitation to Catherine to dance shows Rodolpho's new defiance towards Eddie and candidates often saw this moment as a turning point in the play where the character begins to assert itself. Many had Rodolpho watching Marco's warning to Eddie with a sly smirk of satisfaction.

SGC

Candidates often aired their explicit knowledge of the American context and the period setting of the play. Some relevant points were made about the importance of family to the Italian community. The situation regarding illegal immigrants was also frequently alluded to.

SECTION B

Question 6

Oedipus Rex

Too few responses on *Oedipus Rex* were seen to draw any meaningful conclusions about candidate achievement.

- (a) The question asked candidates to write about their interpretation of the ‘complicated relationship’ between Oedipus and Jocasta. None of the candidates who attempted **Question 6 (a)** addressed the complicated relationship any further than to record the fact that Jocasta was both mother and wife to Oedipus.

There were no responses to **Question 6b**.

SGC

Candidates made scant relevant reference to SGC in their answers.

Question 7

The Government Inspector

This was also a minority choice, and no fully developed responses were seen on either of the optional questions.

Candidates should be studying a translation of Gogol’s play and not a ‘free adaptation’ of the play.

- (a) This option was not selected by sufficient candidates to make much meaningful comment on their achievement.

The question invited a designer’s perspective and a focus on the creation of a design both appropriate to the action and allowing for smooth transitions between different settings.

Unfortunately, the candidates who attempted the question appeared to have given little forethought to the design challenges of this play, set, as it is, in a variety of locations and had few practical suggestions about how to achieve a transition on stage.

- (b) Very few answers were seen on this option. Maria was understood to be a mixture of precociousness and naivete and, depending upon which sections were selected, demonstrated these qualities through occasional practical performance suggestions for her interactions either with her mother or with Khlestakov.

SCG

The social context of the play appeared to have been broadly understood.

Candidates occasionally made reference to the play’s comic style, without necessarily having the skills to achieve comedy through their practical suggestions.

Question 9

Blood Wedding

This play attracted fewer than ten responses.

- (a) This was the minority choice, and it is difficult to draw meaningful conclusions from the very few responses seen.

The question was expected to be answered, primarily, from the perspective of a director, although the question allowed for reference to ‘design and/or technical elements’ to support the answer.

It was therefore surprising to see, in the very few responses offered, that the candidates chose to focus almost exclusively on design elements at the expense of offering suitable directions for the performers.

In these few responses, candidates selected the latter part of Act 2, Scene 2, where the absence of the Bride and Leonardo is discovered and the 'hunt' begins, and the surreal and tension-laden exchanges involving the Woodcutters, Moon and the Beggarwoman in Act 3, Scene 1.

- (b) This question though not attempted by many candidates, was often well answered. A sympathetic portrayal of Leonardo's Wife was presented through a range of strategies, including her pleasing and mild-natured appearance, her devotion to her child, her general submissiveness to her husband and her desolation at the news of the elopement.

Most candidates reflected on the pitiful state of mind of Leonardo's Wife when the body of Leonardo is returned at the end of the play and she mourns his loss.

Some candidates did not adhere to the further requirement of the question that they refer to 'two separate sections'. This meant that some candidates wrote about a single section, while others wrote about more than two sections.

SGC

Many candidates wrote paragraphs about Lorca's personal life which were not helpful nor made relevant to their answers.

Others made more relevant comments on Spanish culture and codes of honour and revenge.

Question 10

Boom

- (b) All of the candidates who had studied this play opted to answer **Question 10b** which asked for an Interpretation of the role of Mother.

The question required a performer's perspective, although not all candidates adopted this perspective.

Most recognised Mother as 'feisty' in her interactions with other characters and in expressing her determination to remain in her flat.

Despite her combative approach to Boon, candidates recognised that her hard exterior conceals a loving and devoted mother and a woman who is still pining for her lost husband and for the happiness that she experienced in her marriage before he 'left' her.

Some candidates referred to Mother's pride in Boon for 'beating up' her unwanted visitor, the male neighbour, in the second half of the play.

They noted too, that although she struggles to accept the death of her husband, she ultimately accepts the move and is appreciative of Boon's gesture in cutting down the tree to take with her.

Some candidates wrote in quite a narrative style and appeared reluctant to adopt the perspective of a performer.

SGC

The majority of references to SGC, in relation to this play, referred to the policy of 'En bloc sales' in Singapore.

A couple of relevant references to cultural attitudes towards the parent/child relationship were also seen in candidates' answers to **Question 10 (b)**.

DRAMA

Paper 9482/02 Practical Drama
--

Key messages

- Some groups made mature choices as to what play they should select for their repertoire performance. It is recommended that care and attention is given to making this choice and that all of the roles are mapped out to ensure that every candidate has a meaningful part to play.
- The standard of performance is A Level and there should be a clear difference in candidates' mind as to the expectations this brings, most importantly, acting skills that demonstrate rehearsal and refinement.
- Devised pieces do not require a complex plot. There were many straightforward pieces that worked well with an audience and communicated their message clearly, rather than through many twists and turns that could confuse an audience.

Administration

The session ran very smoothly, with very few administrative errors. There were a number of transcription errors in the transfer of total marks on the ICMS forms to Submit for Assessment.

Some recordings were of variable quality, especially in the quality of sound recording. This was often because the microphone was too far away from the performance area, or because the acoustics of the performance space were especially resonant.

Several candidates failed to identify themselves to camera before the performance began, which is essential for the moderation process to run smoothly. It is also essential to include a brief description of each candidate's appearance on the ICMS form.

Devised Piece (30 marks)

The assessment consists of the group performance piece (20 marks) assessed under AO2 (Devising). Of these 20 marks, 5 marks are available for the use of the stimulus and a further 15 marks for the ensemble, structure and role. Candidates also submit a spoken self-evaluation (10 marks), assessed under AO4 (Analysing and Evaluating). Centres are requested to give as much detail as possible about the devised piece as moderators sometimes found it to be a challenge to work out details without this element of guidance.

There was a rich variety of stimulus material used, including many events of historical and cultural significance. There were a number of very strong pieces that had a clear sense of what they were trying to communicate, with well-drawn characterisations and a clear shape story. The strongest pieces had a very well developed sense of physicality.

There were some weaker pieces that had almost nothing to communicate and relied on hackneyed devices such as static delivery seated at tables, trite dialogue that lacked credibility, incomplete characters that seemed to operate in an entirely predictable manner, and/or very constrained physicality. This approach to the work gave the impression of having been conceived for television rather than for the stage and was, therefore, not suited to the task required by the syllabus.

Self-Evaluation

The majority of candidates handled the task well and offered some measure of evaluation of their devised piece. The greatest challenge appeared to be structuring what was said so that it fitted within the three minutes allowed. Some candidates raced through everything they could remember about the piece, others struggled to remember very much detail and went over the same ground several times. The strongest work

set out the intention of the piece and then evaluated success in the light of how well that intention was realised.

Scripted piece

The assessment consists of a group scripted performance piece worth 30 marks, assessed under AO3 (Performing). These 30 marks are subdivided into Interpretation and Performance Skills (15 marks) and Communication (15 marks). Most candidates scored similar marks for both sets of criteria, which was a good indication that they had taken a holistic approach to the preparation of repertoire, considering fully the message they intended to communicate and the necessary technique to achieve it.

The range of repertoire was similar to previous sessions and a representative selection is set out in the table below. As in previous sessions, the choice of text was one of the most significant factors in differentiating performance. The strongest performances were invariably where the group worked with a sense of shared purpose to stage a performance text in which they were equal partners. This was the result of careful selection of extract, ensuring that each person's contribution was well balanced. Where this was the case – even when there was a wide range of technical ability – the performance had a solid basis.

The strongest performances had a powerful sense of ensemble, which had the potential to sustain audience engagement for the full duration of the piece. These pieces presented a selection of well-rounded characters, each with a clear performance intention.

Weaker work was often typified by undifferentiated pacing and delivery and character realisation that did little justice to the nuances in the performance text. In the most extreme examples, candidates had learned their words but put little or no expression into the delivery of them.

As in previous sessions, Centres are reminded that the school play or musical cannot be used for this assessment since a **maximum** of six candidates are allowed in the performance. Centres who submit the School show run the risk of having their work rejected by Cambridge for assessment.

Indicative list of performance texts

The following list of performance texts provides examples of what was seen by moderators in November 2025. They are provided for information and there is no requirement for Centres to use any of them for their own work, although they may consider doing so if they wish.

Andrew Bovell	<i>When the Rain Stops Falling</i>
Jim Cartwright	<i>Two</i>
Anton Checkov	<i>Uncle Vanya</i>
Caryl Churchill	<i>Top Girls</i>
Nick Dear	<i>Frankenstein</i>
Euripides	<i>Medea</i>
Dario Fo	<i>Accidental Death of an Anarchist</i>
Stephen Gregg	<i>Why we like Love Stories</i>
Lauren Gunderson	<i>The Revolutionists</i>
Debbie Isitt	<i>The Woman Who Cooked her Husband</i>
David Ives	<i>Sure Thing</i>
Oliver Lansley	<i>Immaculate</i>
David Lindsay Abair	<i>Rabbit Hole</i>
Federico Garcia Lorca	<i>The House of Bernarda Alba</i>
Natasha Gordon	<i>Nine Night</i>
Abi Morgan	<i>Lovesong</i>
Nick Payne	<i>Constellations</i>
Harold Pinter	<i>The Dumb Waiter</i>
J.B Priestley	<i>An Inspector Calls</i>
Mark Ravenhill	<i>Pool, No water</i>
Yasmina Reza	<i>Art</i>
John Patrick Shanley	<i>Women of Manhattan</i>

Cambridge International Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level
9482 Drama November 2025
Principal Examiner Report for Teachers

Neil Simon	<i>Barefoot in the Park</i> <i>The Odd Couple</i>
Shelagh Stephenson	<i>The Memory of Water</i>
Tom Stoppard	<i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead</i>
Jessica Swale	<i>Blue Stockings</i> <i>Nell Gwynn</i>
Polly Teale	<i>Bronte</i>
Oscar Wilde	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>
Tennessee Williams	<i>A Streetcar named Desire</i>
	<i>The Glass Menagerie</i>
	<i>The Pink Bedroom</i>

DRAMA

Paper 9482/03 Theatre-Making and Performing
--

Key messages

- Centres must submit to Cambridge all the specified materials necessary for moderation.
- Candidates must investigate an appropriate professional performance of a play which represents the distinctive qualities of the practitioner, tradition or style.
- For the Group Devised Performance the key task for candidates is to identify the distinctive traits of the practitioner, tradition or style from having investigated a professionally performed production.
- Evaluations must be written as an analytical account of the process of devising and the individual's contribution to the artistic outcome.
- Marking must apply only the assessment criteria descriptors according to the requirements stated in the syllabus. The criteria should be rigorously and fully applied.

General comments

This was the fourth November session of entries for the A2 practical Component Theatre-Making and Performing. A small number of centres were submitted for moderation.

It should be considered by centres that as an assessment, any performance for A level Drama will have elements in common with other formal examinations. To preserve the integrity of the process certain restrictions must be observed to ensure that the presentation is entirely that of the candidates without contribution from other external sources. There are no practitioners, traditions or styles that require audience interaction; therefore if a professional production has been investigated that includes audience interaction, this should not be included for devising. In the Individual performance, interactive presentation which includes audience responses is also not permitted.

As in any other examination, use of electronic informational devices may not be included. There should be no live screens in the performance visible to the candidates but not to the camera, either as hand-held phone or tablet or any screen placed in view of the candidate but not viewable to the audience. All dialogue the performer engages in must be live. There may not be any additional character projected on screen or any broadcast voice included with which an assessed performer engages in dialogue.

A single non-assessed presence is permitted in the Individual Performance as a sleeping partner. That person may be addressed by the performing candidate but may not respond by action or voice and may not make eye contact with the candidate.

The only exception for inclusion of a non-assessed performer is in the Group Devised Performance where a second performer may be included to support a solo candidate offering Group Devised Performance. If a performer in the group piece has since left the centre without having completed the component this must be made known in the information provided by the centre to the moderator.

In either case, where a performer is present in the Group Devised performance who is not an assessed candidate, this must clearly be accounted for in the centre's administrative documentation, and where it is known in advance that the non-assessed performer would not be marked, the documentation must provide evidence that Cambridge has approved the inclusion of the non-assessed performer. Additional performers beyond the minimum group number of two performers would be an uncommon exception and may only be considered where the investigated work of the practitioner, tradition or style identifies a specific need for an ensemble performance of a larger number than two. In this case approval must be sought from Cambridge and evidence must be provided that this has been permitted.

Centres must ensure that all assessed work and administrative material has been submitted.

The syllabus provides all necessary information to fulfil the requirements for this qualification.

Where Centres have used teaching resources specifically created for this syllabus that have not been produced by Cambridge centres are advised that these should be used with caution and any guidance offered should only be applied where this clearly matches syllabus requirements.

Centres must be rigorous in ensuring that the required materials are provided to the moderator. Moderation can only be undertaken where the fully completed ICMS forms, the Group Devised Cover Sheet, complete video recordings and candidate evaluations for the requested sample are all submitted without exception. There were issues with missing and incomplete assessment materials and information regarding non-assessed candidates that had to be requested from centres. Video files for groups and individual performance must be checked as present, working and fully viewable and audible prior to submission.

ICMS forms were usually fully completed, which greatly assisted moderation.

Assessment comments must align to the descriptors in the assessment criteria.

The comments seen were sometimes:

- variable or inaccurate in citing the assessment criteria descriptors
- incomplete or brief
- excessively long and not viewable in the box provided for comment
- not related to the assessment criteria.

It is helpful also for candidates in the video recording to identify themselves to camera with name and candidate number prior to performance in both group and individual performance.

It is also helpful for candidates to be readily identifiable in the costume worn for Group Devised Performance. Plain black performance costumes were not always the most appropriate costume for the style/tradition chosen.

Centre reports

These will refer to the specific assessment criteria for this component to identify how the centre has met syllabus requirements and to what extent the marking was judged to align to the criteria. Where an adjustment to marks has been made the centre should consider their marks awarded against the Centre Report comments to understand how any adjustment has been made. Where no adjustment has been made the Centre report will state that the marking was in line with the standard; or broadly in line where there was some minor variability noted in application of the standard.

It is not a specified requirement that candidates should identify themselves in a lineup at the start of a performance but it is most helpful to include this at the opening of the video record.

The ICMS should also clearly identify the candidate by appearance for Group Devised Performance.

Audience members may not participate in any part of an assessed performance. Centres should inform the audience that they may not record or take photographs during the performance.

Comments on specific tasks

Devised Performance and Evaluation (40 marks)

Devising

Moderators reported that most submissions seen showed competent or broad understanding in devising in a chosen practice or style.

Some devising was seen where no professional production had been identified as having been investigated.

Where there is more than one group presenting devised performance for this component, each group must devise their performances entirely independently of the work of any other group.

The group devised performance must be a minimum of 15 minutes and a maximum of 20 minutes in length. This is not open to extension. Guided by the teacher assessor, candidates must demonstrate creative discipline in fulfilling this requirement. Where the time limit is significantly exceeded, Centres should not award marks in the highest bands for devising and role.

English must be the primary language of the professional performance investigated except where the work was not originally performed in English and an appropriate production can be researched in that language.

In researching for the Group Devised Performance candidates should focus their activities on identifying the distinctive traits of the practitioner, tradition or style through the study of one appropriate professional production, current or historical.

Where a group is not able to fulfil aspects of the chosen style intended these cannot creditably be replaced with other performance aspects that do not align to the practitioner's style. There is not a requirement to apply advanced technology for this component but where this is a feature of a chosen production to be investigated that does represent the style of the practitioner, the centre should consider whether this is the most appropriate work and/or practitioner for devising a piece in that style.

It was not always clear in the submissions from some centres for this session that candidates had done more than select a style for performance from the Component 03 list and apply theoretical knowledge of aspects of that style in performance. It is for centres to ensure that candidates undertake an appropriate investigation of a professionally performed production.

An internet link to a video site where candidates may have viewed some performance material is not sufficient to identify the professional production investigated on the Group Devised Cover Sheet.

The investigation must be the subject of careful analysis to identify the key elements of that practitioner, style or tradition to be applied in candidates' own devising. Devising must not consider the production merely as a stimulus.

An appropriate production is one that closely fulfils the identifiable qualities of the practitioner, tradition or style. Candidates should bear in mind when undertaking the investigation, that contemporary companies performing to present day audiences may aim to be innovative and so may not always be rigorous in applying the traits of more historical theatrical styles. Care should be taken when investigating such productions to distinguish the key elements of the style for devising as distinct from other aspects of performance in a contemporary professional production that may have been included for broader entertainment effect.

Moderators noted a tendency to award high marks for devising and role where moderation found the tradition or practice to be unevenly applied. Additional research into the practices of the practitioner, tradition or style prior to the investigation of a professional production is likely to be beneficial to candidates to assist in making those essential distinctions when undertaking the investigation. Where elements of style are included in the Group Devised Performance that are not the distinctive hallmarks of the chosen style or tradition, including parody of other entertainment forms, this limits the maximum that can be awarded for Devising to the middle range of marking for the distinctive traits of the chosen style.

Written evaluations

The written evaluations submitted this session sometimes addressed the criteria well.

The assessment criteria for the written evaluation for Group Devised performance are clear that marks are to be awarded for:

- ***an account of the process of devising the piece and identifying its artistic outcomes*** and the candidate should also provide
- ***an evaluation of their personal contribution to the success of the devised performance in achieving its intentions.***

Candidate writing was sometimes an account more focused on performance outcomes with narrow or limited evidence of the process of devising, sometimes with little or no reference to the dramatic effects of the application of traits identified from research into the professional performance investigated. This should limit the marking to the middle or lower levels for the 800-word evaluation when applying the assessment criteria.

Audience surveys are not able to address these as the essential criteria and should not be used as evidence in evaluating the devised work.

It may be useful for centres to refer candidates to the assessment criteria on page 41 of the syllabus for the written evaluation as a guideline for what is expected in their writing.

Candidates were careful in their evaluative writing to adhere to the 800-word limit.

Designers

There were no submissions from design candidates in this session.

Individual performance (20 marks)

Candidates met the requirements for timings for this part of the submission in the work seen. Some presentations did not clearly identify the extracts to be performed in the links but discussed the theme only. This is insufficient information for an audience and where the ICMS was also unclear what extracts were to be performed, this generated some difficulties for moderation.

The performing space for the individual presentations was appropriate in all centre submissions seen, although sometimes recorded at some distance from the candidate and under a small spotlight which the camera could not focus upon clearly. Overly bright lighting which washes out or blurs facial expressions impedes moderation. Similarly, very dark staging that the camera cannot clearly capture also restricts moderation. It is essential that centres should conduct test recordings and review these to ensure that the recording will be of appropriate quality to submit for moderation.

There is no specific requirement that the Individual Performance should present a contrast between pieces, or a contrast to the Group Devised performance. There is no specified nor preferred way to introduce a text.

Links between texts performed

Links were usually appropriately brief and well considered. It was not clear that all centres were aware that for clarity, it is helpful for the candidate to introduce the theme and identify the first extract at the outset of the programme of performance texts rather than after the delivery of the first text.

Marking was within the appropriate bands for the individual performance across the range of work seen, occasionally with some generosity for the links made.

Texts chosen for performance

A range of texts and themes was chosen for performance. Emotional themes of trauma, love, vulnerability, insanity and self-identity, and social themes of family relationships, emancipation, gender and gender equality issues were popular. Candidates usually showed commendable enthusiasm and commitment to the chosen texts and to their chosen theme.

Theatre Traditions and Styles	
<i>Farce</i>	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>
Practitioners	
<i>Artaud</i>	
<i>Bertolt Brecht</i>	<i>The Caucasian Chalk Circle</i>
<i>Katie Mitchell</i>	<i>Orlando, A Woman Killed With Kindness</i>

DRAMA

Paper 9482/04 Theatre in Context

Key messages

The choice of an appropriate research question or statement is crucial in that it guides the direction of the essay. A well-focused, specific research question or statement is key to accessing the full range of marks available.

One or two submissions lacked a research question entirely.

Analysis and evaluation should, wherever possible, be original. Over dependence on cited sources reduces access to the AO4 C and AO4 D assessment criteria.

Bibliographies should be correctly formatted, and all material referenced in the body of the essay should appear in the bibliography.

General comments

Much work was varied, often interesting and engaging and some responses showed genuine enthusiasm for the chosen topic.

Some candidates made unwise choices in respect of their research question or statement being either too complex or too vague. As a consequence, some did not produce a succinct argument.

As a reminder, the strongest work was characterised by the following:

- a passion for the chosen topic
- a well-chosen question/title
- thorough research and exploration
- highly relevant, well-referenced/cited sources
- clear examples of wider reading/viewing as noted in a comprehensive bibliography
- a clear, concise conclusion.

The importance of teacher/centre guidance in making the right choices with regard to the title or research question or statement cannot be over-emphasised; ensuring that the essay is written under the correct parameters is crucial to achieving the higher mark bands.

Drafting viable questions continues to be a problem. The scope of some questions is large and difficult to do within the given word count. Sometimes a question gave a clear focus but then the candidate strayed away from this to discuss other aspects or background research a little too much. This sometimes led to quotations or visuals being included in the essay that were only loosely connected and were not very useful for answering the question.

The most successful essays had a carefully crafted question that allowed sufficient scope to meet the demands of the task. Weaker work often included extensive narration and/or biographical information that did not specifically relate to the focus of the question. Stronger work repeatedly sought to explicitly address the question whilst demonstrating Knowledge and Understanding of practical aspects of theatre-making with a good level of analysis and evaluation.

Other areas worthy of note are:

Illustrative material

- There are several examples of images being included for embellishment rather than being explicitly referred to in order to illustrate points made. This is a particularly undermining when the candidate is exploring a design question where carefully chosen visuals would really support claims made. More than once, posters of productions were included but these distracted somewhat from the flow of the essay and did not add much.
- Bibliographies were sometimes incomplete – including filmed productions that had been referred to within the body of the essay. ‘Last accessed’ dates were often missing.
- Several essays did not include a correctly formatted bibliography although some did include in-text references. Sometimes a bibliography did not include all in-text references. On page 42 of the syllabus it states, ‘candidates must present their findings in accordance with the conventions of academic writing, including thorough referencing of sources and a full bibliography’.
- Some candidates are still focusing too much on texts as literary works rather than staged theatre productions and this leads to issues securing marks for AO1B. Approaches offering creative performance possibilities rather than analysing the work of others cannot score highly because they miss the focus of the task as a research essay.

Positives to emerge from the work seen by examiners include:

- Some introductions were well written, concise and presented a robust argument.
- Some conclusions drew the essay together very effectively and demonstrated the criteria of Analysis and Evaluation very well.

Comments on specific criteria

Criteria A

Many candidates secured good marks here with many showing assured K and U. However, candidates should bear in mind the second bullet point in the list i.e. ‘range of appropriate and relevant supporting evidence’ as this was lacking in a significant number of examples. All quotations and any paraphrasing should be referenced carefully both in-text and in the bibliography. In a number of cases evidence could have been used better to support claims made.

Criteria B

This was the second strongest criteria with several essays showing a good level of practical K and U. Some more careful selection of effective illustrative material would help.

Criteria C

There were a few examples of essays with frequent, well-focused analysis whereas in the case of others analysis was inconsistent and uneven. The most common approach is one where analysis is heavily reliant on cited sources meaning that it lacked originality. Occasionally there was some confusion of ideas and centres could perhaps use the drafting process to assist candidates in checking these.

Criteria D

As with **Criteria C**, there tended to be a mix of attainment here with some well sustained and well-developed evaluation but also some work with superficial and intermittent evaluative comment. All too often evaluative comment appears to be ‘second hand’ i.e. derived from the observations of cited sources as opposed to original comment from the candidate themselves.