

# Examiners' Report

## June 2017

GCE Drama & Theatre 8DR0 02

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## Introduction

In the first series of this examination it is worth reporting on a number of areas that have been highlighted by examiners, to offer further guidance regarding the structure and purpose of this examination.

To support colleagues delivering the new specification, a wide range of support and planning materials has been made available online. These include Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs), mark schemes, exemplar materials marked by the senior examining team, overviews of, and approaches to, the specific texts, with examples of responses from both Section A and Section B. These exemplars cover all areas of the SAMs, contain extensive commentary regarding the application of the mark scheme, as well as highlighting issues regarding how the candidates have approached the sample questions.

Centres should ensure that candidates' subject-specific vocabulary is well developed and allows them to express their judgements in a precise and articulate manner.

A subject-specific performance glossary was made available as part of the *Getting Started Guide*; this covers performance, costume, lighting, set, and sound design and provides an indication of the level of technical language required.

'Ask the Expert' is an ongoing forum providing colleagues with information regarding common questions and issues. The FAQ web-page is updated regularly and, again, has answered questions from colleagues regarding the delivery of the specification and the examination. These materials have been well-received by colleagues, who appear to have found them useful in preparing candidates for the examination. It is important that centres take the time to look at example materials made available, to help gauge the expected standard and requirements of this component.

Whilst the amount that candidates write does not define the mark awarded, there are approximately five sides of A4 available for responses. It is expected that to produce a fully-developed response, candidates will produce more than two-to-three sides of A4 under examination conditions. Examples of brief, under-developed responses, that did not provide the level of analytical and evaluative detail required at this level, were evident as candidates ran out of time or ideas. It is important that centres encourage candidates to write under examination conditions on a regular basis, to ensure they can deliver fully-developed responses under exam conditions.

'Theatre makers in Practice' focuses on the work of theatre makers and the theatrical choices that are made by members of the creative and production team to communicate ideas to an audience. In the written paper, students interpret, analyse, and evaluate their experience of a live theatre performance.

This written examination is 1 hour 45 minutes in length and is divided into two sections – Section A: Live Theatre Evaluation and Section B: Page to Stage: Realising a Performance Text. Section A is worth 16 marks and contains an element of choice to allow all candidates access to the question paper. Section B is worth 32 marks and contains two compulsory questions dealing with performance and design respectively. Both questions are worth 16 marks.

The focus of each of the sections in the examination is as follows:

**Section A: Live Theatre Evaluation** is about candidates as informed audience members, reflecting on their experience of a live theatre event. This should enable them to demonstrate knowledge and understanding, through analysis and evaluation. Candidates may bring in theatre evaluation notes of up to a maximum of 500 words.

**Section B: Page to Stage: Realising a Performance Text** deals with the exploration of a complete performance text and asks candidates to consider how theatrical ideas might be realised in performance and communicated to create impact for the audience. The specified texts are:

*Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, Dario Fo

*Colder Than Here*, Laura Wade

*Equus*, Peter Shaffer

*Fences*, August Wilson

*Machinal*, Sophie Treadwell

*That Face*, Polly Stenham

Candidates need to consider how both performers and designers use theatrical conventions and dramatic elements to realise ideas from the page to the stage. Candidates respond to an unseen extract from the chosen text but are expected to demonstrate knowledge of the whole text in their response.

### **Section A: Live Theatre Evaluation**

The paper provided alternative questions to allow all candidates a choice: the contribution of the lighting designer through use of lighting states, or how vocal skills were used to create characterisation.

This mirrors questions asked in the SAMs, published on the Drama subject page. One of the reasons for providing options is that students are not disadvantaged if the production seen does not contain some of the elements being tested. The alternatives are available to ensure students have an opportunity to access at least one of the two options available.

The qualification was developed with a clear understanding that a student is not necessarily a performer. Students may complete the qualification as a performer or a designer, to make the most of individual skills and interests. Students have been encouraged to focus on live theatre production throughout the qualification; this involves the analysis of how a range of production elements is brought together by theatre makers to create a finished product.

As outlined in the specification, Theatre is a collaborative art form and it is important that students have a clear understanding of how different creative ideas are put into practice. Students are required to learn how to interpret, analyse and evaluate their experience of a live theatre performance and develop the skills to deconstruct specific elements. Students should analyse and evaluate the ways directors, performers and designers create impact and meaning through dramatic and theatrical elements.

It is important to note that, when choosing a performance for live evaluation, centres consider that students can be asked to demonstrate awareness of a range of production elements, eg costume, set, sound or lighting. Page 40 of the specification states:

*When choosing a performance, the following should be taken into consideration:*

- *whilst both amateur and professional productions are acceptable, it is not possible to evaluate the work of other students for this assessment*
- *the live theatre performance cannot be a performance text that is on the prescribed list of this specification*
- *it should ideally demonstrate a range of production elements, for example costume, set, sound, lighting*
- *the production should present opportunities for students to discuss the work of key theatre makers, for example directors, performers, and designers*
- *the production must provide opportunities for students to use a subject-specific vocabulary. For the purposes of this qualification live theatre means being in the same performance space as the performers. It does not include any performance that is sung-through in its entirety. The performance can be an amateur or professional production as long as the choice enables students to access the demands of this component. It is desirable for students to see as much live theatre as possible throughout the course, although only one performance will be written about in the examination.*

The production seen should present opportunities for students to discuss the work of key theatre makers, including directors, performers and designers. For this paper, the questions focussed on analysing and evaluating either the contribution made by one key theatre maker, or how a specific dramatic element was used in production.

There is an expectation from examiners that candidates prepare for the examination by creating notes to support Section A responses. Information about what is allowed in the notes and annotation of the text can be found in the Specification p 41.

*These notes may include reference to:*

- *performers, including performers in specific roles*
- *design considerations, including the use of costume, set, lighting and sound*
- *the director's concept/interpretation and the chosen performance style*
- *impact on the audience, including, specifically, on the student, and how this was achieved*
- *the use of the theatre space*
- *how ideas were communicated during the performance. Sketches, drawings and diagrams may also be included in the notes and used to support the response to the question if required.*

The component requires candidates to respond to the specific focus of the question, rather than offering a generalised overview based too closely on pre-prepared material.

In the initial series of this examination, examiners reported that there was evidence of candidates being well-prepared for the demands of this unit. Those candidates who cited a range of specific, tangible examples allowed examiners to visualise the moment, allowing for effective evaluative commentary. This was particularly true of responses where the

productions seen have led to responses that addressed the specific demands of the question.

Popular productions seen included Frantic Assembly's *Things I know to be True*, the Royal Shakespeare Company's *The Tempest* and the National Theatre's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*.

Less successful responses did not answer the question and merely described the production they saw. In some cases, candidates were very critical but did not support their view with detailed or considered analysis. Some candidates wrote about performances that were sung-through in their entirety including *Sweeney Todd*, which was unfortunate because the nature of this production was not in keeping with the requirements of the specification.

More successful answers were from candidates who had clearly enjoyed the theatrical experience and were able to offer detailed analysis, supported by understanding based on their learning through the course.

There were three main reasons why candidates were not able to access marks in the higher levels in this section:

- Brief, under-developed responses of two-to-three sides of A4
- Responses that were not sufficiently analytical or evaluative and merely reported the experience from the viewpoint of a member of the audience
- Responses in which the specific demands of the question were not met, and there was a clear sense of the response having been taken straight from notes

### **Section B: Page to Stage: Realising a Performance Text**

This section of the paper required candidates to apply their knowledge and understanding to two areas: performance and design. Candidates needed to consider how both performers and designers used theatrical conventions and dramatic elements to realise ideas moving from the page to the stage.

Candidates responded to an unseen extract from the chosen text but were *expected to demonstrate knowledge of the whole text in their response*.

This mirrors the expectations contained in the SAMs published on the Drama subject page.

Candidates responded to all of the set texts, but some texts were more popular than others. *Machinal*, *Equus*, and *That Face* were by far the most popular choices with *Colder than Here* and *Fences* receiving fewer candidate responses.

The pages in the examination paper have been compiled with an expectation of the maximum amount a candidate can be expected to write in a two-and-a-half-hour examination. Taking size of hand-writing into account, there is no expectation for candidates to write beyond the pages of the booklet to access the higher levels of marks. The examples in this report are taken from work by candidates completed within the framework of the answer booklet.

Across the cohort there was evidence of candidates being able to access the question paper and provide well-informed, articulate responses. The extracts in this report represent responses that achieved higher level marks as well as examples of responses that illustrate common problems. The extracts demonstrate ways in which candidates can access higher level marks, and common issues when failing to meet the demands of the question. This

will provide an insight into the range of responses examiners have seen. These responses should be read in conjunction with the commentary included with each extract, the examination paper, and the published mark scheme.

## Question 1

This was the most popular amongst candidates this year, producing a wide range of responses.

The most successful candidates wrote about a live theatrical event which allowed access to the focus of the question.

A range of lighting states was analysed and evaluated, with varying levels of expertise and subject-specific knowledge. It is important that candidates possess the subject-specific vocabulary required to write effectively about their chosen area of focus.

The best responses were well-informed and made perceptive comments, balancing analytical understanding against informed, evaluative judgements. Knowledge of designer aims and objectives, and how these informed audience understanding/impact, allowed some candidates the opportunity to create sophisticated responses.

When evaluating the contribution of the lighting designer, a personal response, rooted in first-person narrative offered a much more accurate and precise evaluative focus than a generalised response from an audience perspective. There were examples of candidates writing in a limited way, demonstrating a lack of understanding, subject-specific knowledge and precise evaluative focus.

It is essential that candidate responses contain a balanced consideration between analysis and evaluation. Responses that demonstrate isolated analysis without evaluation can only achieve a maximum of four marks.

There was evidence of detailed, analytical responses that contained no evaluative qualities, implicit or inferred. Consequently, in these cases, only four marks could be awarded.

## Section A

This is a Level 5 response. The candidate writes in a sophisticated and perceptive manner, addressing the use of lighting states and the contribution these made to the performance. Throughout, there is clear evidence of analytical and evaluative balance, which is expressed using authoritative knowledge and understanding.

Articulate use of subject-specific knowledge ensures the quality of expression is assured and that examples are analysed in fine detail. The candidate writes from an informed perspective, using first-person narrative to articulate personal judgements, not generic audience judgements.

### Performance details

Title:

*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*

Venue:

*The Gielgud Theatre*

Date seen:

*27th of September 2016*



On the 27th of September 2016, I went to see "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time" at the Gielgud Theatre in London. The director was Marianne Elliott and the principal cast included Joseph Ayre as Christopher, Jo Castleton as Siobhanna ~~and~~ Nicolas Tennant as Christopher's dad and Penelope McGuire as Christopher's mother. The lighting designer Paul Constantine and his use of lighting states had a big impact on the audience and was able to transport the audience into a Autism sufferer's perspective of the world. Firstly I will be analysing Constantine's use of colour in the lighting states and ~~to see~~ whether that helped create Christopher's world to the audience and the impact it had, then as an informed member of the audience I will evaluate the effect of the colour in the lighting states to the audience and whether the lighting designer achieved his aim. Secondly I will analyse the use of lighting states to create location and whether they created Christopher's world to the audience, finally as an informed member of the audience I will evaluate whether the designer achieved his aims and created clarity in the lighting to the audience.

The use of colour in the lighting states had a massive impact on the audience as the colour helped create

Christopher's world, through the play we see Christopher suffer from Autism and a way in which he copes in understanding his surroundings and people, he makes positive and negative colour associations, Constable carried this through to the lighting to further the director aims for the play and create a clear understanding of how a Autism sufferer sees the world to the audience. My first example is the use of yellow in the lighting and the negative association it provides, within a scene in the play, Christopher is at a tube station and is ~~spansy~~ lost due to never being at a train station on his own before, Christopher panics when he walks on to the yellow lit platform, using a ~~Pos~~ AR can defined edge with a yellow gel on top Constable was clearly able to create a precise rectangle of colour ~~set~~ covering the platform, semiotically the audience can understand Christopher's panic, represented by the yellow lighting, expressing to the audience he doesn't like the platform, also at the very beginning Christopher broke the fourth wall and tells the audience about the colour associations, making it very clear for the audience to understand Christopher's reaction, due to the symbolism of the colour. Another example of colour used in the lighting states in the scene where he ~~explains~~ is remembering a memory of his mum at the seaside and particularly in the sea, throughout his mother wears blue and that

symbolise her neutral position in her life and her ~~un~~ importance to him, Constable uses blue in this moment where his mum is diving into the sea, using a flood light on the centre of the stage, Constable created a blue wash, the lighting states again used to represent the colour symbolism. My last example is the scene in which Christopher is at the train station, due to the huge crowd of people he starts panicking and losing control however when he sees the red lights he is guided out of his panic; in the panic moment Constable in a common motion lit <sup>up the</sup> red LED lights embedded into the floor, clearly expressing to the audience that Christopher trust the color red and follow it as times of panic. Constable fully immersing the audience <sup>due to</sup> ~~is a~~ Art and inspired lighting, being detailed and immersive.

As an informal member of the audience I was extremely impressed with the affects ~~the scene~~ that Constable's use of color <sup>in lighting</sup> had within the performance, the furthering of the color associations within the lighting gave the audience clarity into Christopher's feelings, but also stepped inside Christopher's head and like he would do, examined people and situations with color associations. The Art and inspired lighting created a immersive experience for the audience, transporting them in to Christopher's mind, due to the lighting states. The symbolism of the colors were enriched due



to their inclusion within the lighting, following on Christopher's perspective in every detail and possible method, clear symbolism picked up by the audience. However there were moments within the play where clarity was lost and colour symbolism within the lighting was not carried through. In one scene of the play, Christopher has a seizure, in this moment Constable used flashing lights but didn't include a coloured gell behind the light, which needed to be yellow to show his panic, however this wasn't included meaning some of the clarity and detail was lost, I would suggest even more precision within the colour in the lighting states, truly representative of Christopher's perspective and view of the world.

Constable's use of the lighting states ~~to~~ to create location had a massive impact as Constable was able to showcase to the audience how Christopher (an autism sufferer) saw the world, ~~the~~ location seen stereotypically and basically. My first example is Constable's use of lighting to create the look of a train, in one scene Christopher is on the train platform (only expressed through one piece of set being higher than the other) in this moment Christopher jumps into the tracks to save his rat, unaware of his safety due to his autism, using two profile spots coming from the direction of the incoming train, Constable was clearly able

to transport the audience into the location, the circular spot, even enlarged to show the train getting closer, the lighting creating Christopher's stereotyped understanding of location, another moment of lighting to create location, was in the scene where Christopher is at the entrance of the tube station, the ~~stage~~ stage is empty, of set, so Constable was the only creator of location, using projection, Constable projected various train adverts, signs and time tables on the back wall, the rest of the stage in darkness, expressing how Christopher only remembers location from a object, clearly represented by Constable. My last example is Constable's use of lighting to create Christopher's neighbourhood, within one scene, Christopher is walking round his neighbour

hood, due to the lack of set on stage, Constable created the sense of houses ~~as~~ through Fresnels, which clearly outlined each house, Christopher was visiting, also benefiting the actors as they could react to their house, Semiotically, the audience understanding that the lighting represented houses.

As an informal member of the audience I was highly impressed at how much effect lighting had in creating location and symbolising the stereotypical way in which Christopher understood location, clearly symbolised to the audience, by lighting being

The only method in creating location. Again controllable was able to represent Atwood's immersive theatre style, by quickly transporting the audience in to different locations, with the use of detailed lighting. However in one scene the lighting didn't create location, something in which I felt didn't flow within the play, to create Christopher's bedroom a set creating a bed was used, I feel as though lighting should of been used to create the bed, to make the performer symbolism connect more and give the audience clarity sensorially. However overall the lighting design was very creative and detailed with the lighting, creating clear location and a clear perspective of Christopher's view of the world.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The structure takes the examiner logically through a series of lighting states that informs the narrative structure of *Curious Incident* and helps to provide an insight into the world of Christopher Boone.

This is a well-developed response that provides a range of detailed examples. Each example is analysed in terms of how lighting defined Christopher's perception of the world, and shifts in time and place.

Examples are cited and explored in forensic detail, through painstaking analysis. This is then balanced with a personal evaluation of the impact and the effectiveness of each lighting state. The candidate references lantern types, and uses the vocabulary of lighting design, in an assured and sophisticated way. The name of the lighting designer is used and practitioner influence is referenced, providing evidence of wider knowledge and understanding. This is not a practitioner-based response but the inferences made are pertinent to this production.

The candidate writes from a personal, rather than an audience, perspective.

16 marks



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Tip**

Structure your response, using a balance between analysis and evaluation



## Question 2

This question focussed on how vocal skills were used to create characterisation. Issues regarding the length of the response, levels of analysis and evaluation are common to both responses. Again, it is important that candidates possess the subject-specific vocabulary required to write effectively about their chosen area of focus. As in Question 1, descriptive, generalised responses that lacked subject-specific vocabulary to define skills, whether technical or performance-driven, did not gain access to higher levels.

Some candidates were able to cite quotations from the performance, allowing for an almost forensic analysis of how vocal skills were used to create characterisation; this added precision both to analysis and evaluation. Most candidates could separate the actor from the role and referenced performers' names throughout, which was reassuring. The focus for the question was not just how vocal skills were used, but specifically how they were used to create *character*. Some candidates did not acknowledge this, and consequently there was an impact upon the level awarded and the quality of evaluation offered.

The specification states that:

*'live theatre .....does not include any performance that is sung-through in its entirety.'*

Despite this, some candidates wrote about performances such as *Sweeney Todd* and *Les Miserables*, which do precisely this. 'Vocal skills' references the delivery of dialogue: it is not about musical theatre.

### Performance details

Title:

A Winter's tale

Venue:

Oxford playhouse

Date seen:

1<sup>st</sup> march 2017

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen question number: Question 1 ☒ Question 2 ☒

Write your answer here:

~~The lighting designer mark, was very focused on just the lighting aspect of the performance, so was able to focus~~

The vocal skills were used by the performers to create and build their individual characters.

one key moment in the performance where voice was



used to create mood, atmosphere and establish location, was in the Court scene, where Hermione's fate is decided by a judge. In Cheek by Jowl's representation of this scene, it was done in a very modernised way, typical of Cheek by Jowl, where the overall look and feel created a televisionised feel. This can be linked to ~~sim~~ The performers in this scene whose voice built character was Hermione, played by Natalie Radmall-Quirke. She uses her ~~the~~ voice to portray the emotion that her character is feeling. By speaking in loud volume and collectedly, it shows us that her character, despite all she's been through, is true to herself, and strong. This makes the audience like her as a character, causing them to feel more empathy for her as the play goes on. Because in this scene, you know that she hasn't done it, the dramatic irony further causes you to want Leontes to see that he's being stupid. So when Hermione <sup>pleads with Leontes</sup> ~~uses pleading tones~~, she as a performer raises her volume, uses a higher pitch and has a hoarse voice because it <sup>shows</sup> ~~creates~~ to the audience member that she's really trying to get him to believe her. This shows a development in her characterisation because it shows Hermione is honest, and I felt that Leontes didn't deserve her.

Keeping with Hermione's characterisation developed with vocal skills, the way she talks to her son Mamillius not only develops her character, but also her relationship with him. When she talks to Mamillius she talks in a low toned slow hum, like her words are buttery, this shows that her

character is friendly and loving as this way of speaking makes you as an audience member feel comfortable. Going onto Mamillius's character, played by Tom Courte, he, for Mamillius's character, spoke in high pitched squeaky voice that only escalated when he was having a tantrum. He would become uncontrollable lashing out of limbs, screaming and shouting 'No!' in a whiney way. The extremity of his tantrums caused by the smallest of things made me as an audience member, wonder if he could be placed on the autistic spectrum. The vocal skills he uses develop his character to seem whiney, and annoying. The effect that this has on the audience is they'll begin to resent Mamillius being on stage, because of the feeling, he gives them. However, audience members may be able to relate if they have little children themselves, making it relatable.

Because of the directors and performers choice to portray Mamillius, when he dies, the audience feel guilty, because even though he used whiney voices and screamed and had tantrums, he didn't deserve to die. Mamillius's death, in the play is so sudden, making you wonder the cause of his death. When Hermione is put in jail Mamillius has no longer got the welcoming honey-like voice of Hermione to calm him down, and the way his tantrums were performed you'd think if you carried on like that you'd get ill. The director's choice of Mamillius's tantrums can be

compared with the way Leontes acts, played by Orlando James. Leontes, when blaming/accusing Hermione and Polixenes of having an affair, he stomps about, similar to Mamillius and uses similar vocal techniques: whiney voice, high pitch, scratchy, screechy ways of performing his lines. As an audience member, being able to clearly see a comparison between the son and his father, causes you to feel like, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Mamillius is like this because he's learnt it from his father. This similarity develops feelings of disrespect for Leontes, as he comes across as childish and disrespectful himself. His character develops as you see this symbolic field of childishness in Leontes throughout act one. However, when Mamillius dies this is completely dropped. He becomes ~~even~~ cold, sorry and regretful. This is shown to the audience by the change in how his lines are directed. His voice is softer and more low pitched, with his words being spoken more slowly. In the dialogue he speaks of regret in act two, which makes the audience see that he is regretful, and gets you to sympathise for him. The theme of men vs women is highlighted with the characterisation of the character Paulina, played by Joy Richardson. She is seen as a peace maker, and with her character, overcomes the stereotype that men are superior to women. A very ahead of its time concept for Shakespeare's times. Paulina spoke slowly always, she spoke in a low tone that was strong but not harsh. She created this amazing strong female

character with her vocal skills and allowed her to be respected by other female and male audience members. Her voice and an authority which was also seen by her voice, in the confident, ~~not but~~ straight to the point way she spoke to Leontes a man in power, shows similar beliefs that <sup>we</sup> are aware of now, gender equality, a rise in feminism and equal rights. These make this section where Pauline speaks to Leontes, bringing him his baby a key part of the play and makes it relevant to a modern day audience.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is a Level 4 response. The candidate writes in a confident and assured way, exploring how vocal skills are used to create character: the response is developed and fulsome.

The candidate provides a range of examples and is able to balance analysis against evaluation effectively. Individual actors are named and there is a clear delineation between role and performer.

The candidate writes in a personal manner, although at times this is generalised by referencing the audience response, rather than a more personal one. There is clear evidence of assured knowledge and understanding, which is expressed clearly through subject-specific terminology.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Practise writing essays under exam conditions  
Learn subject-specific vocabulary



### Question 3

This question asked the candidate *as a performer* to discuss how they might interpret and portray *one* of the key roles in the extract, referencing the performance text as a whole.

This was not a question about exploring a role in the rehearsal room: it dealt with how the interpretation is developed through performance. Rehearsal deals with preparation for performance, not performance itself. Consequently, references to the rehearsal room or rehearsal techniques were irrelevant. Those candidates who focussed on the rehearsal room could not gain access to the higher mark levels. Similarly, some candidates were seduced by the lure of the practitioner methodologies and focussed on rehearsal room techniques. In such cases, the practitioner took priority over personal development and the text. In fact, there were very few examples of candidates referencing the rehearsal room in the responses seen, with the overwhelming majority dealing with the interpretation of the role in performance.

When interpreting a role, candidates should express ideas about their intentions for the portrayal of the specified role in performance. A candidate presenting a sophisticated response will have a fulsome, creative, and perceptive grasp of how they intend to interpret and portray this role, providing justification for these creative choices. This interpretation will demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the complete text and extract. This interpretation will be portrayed effectively to an audience, using a range of performance techniques. The focus for development is the exploration of how ideas and intentions are developed from page to stage, within the context of the complete performance text.

Successful candidates placed themselves into the acting role and provided a clear sense of the scene, the wider context of the play, their interpretation, and how they would perform. This was supported by an analysis/justification of the creative choices underpinning their decisions. Less-able candidates showed a limited understanding of the playwright's intention or themes/issues. A minimal use of quotation to provide justification or effective analysis often resulted in very generalised responses. These did not provide the level of analysis and development expected at this level.

Connections with the complete performance text were not always explicit and a substantial number of candidates focussed exclusively on the extract. The mark scheme references knowledge of the wider text at every level; this is an area of concern for future series'. Centres should ensure that candidates are in the habit of addressing the character arc across the whole of the text. In many instances, connections to the wider text were inferred or implicit, rather than explicit.

In some instances, candidates took a distanced view of the role being interpreted, adopting a third-person narrative. Therefore, nothing in these responses indicated that candidates were writing 'as a performer' able to 'interpret and portray' the role. This approach did not address the question as a performer but rather as a director, which was not what was required. Consequently, candidates who adopted this approach could not gain access to higher level marks. The exemplar materials marked by the senior examining team and published online, contained extensive commentary regarding the application of the mark scheme, as well as highlighting this and other issues.

*Accidental Death of an Anarchist* was a popular choice, with some candidates producing articulate, well-informed responses capturing Absurdist, Commedia performance qualities. Unfortunately for many candidates, the complexity of political farce, multi role-playing and extreme gestural physicality, proved too demanding. Few candidates were able to extend their response outside the given extract.

In responses to *Machinal*, a few candidates chose to write as the actor playing one of the male roles, which appears in only one part of the extract. This did not disadvantage them, because they focussed on the delivery of that moment, and were able to comment on how this might affect the previous, or following, scene. The role of The Woman seemed to be the more popular choice, and candidates could reflect upon the impact of the extract on the play as a whole.

In *Equus* there was an equal balance between character choice for interpretation. Successful candidates could explore the moment contextually within the whole play and analyse how this would impact upon their portrayal of the role.

Whilst *Fences* was the least popular choice, examiners reported seeing a wide range of responses. Some contained beautifully-detailed moments that transported the examiner from page to stage.

*Colder than Here* produced some wonderfully poignant responses. Candidates were able to define their interpretation from a personal perspective, exploring how they would realise this, using performance techniques.

*That Face* also provided some interesting responses but these were often brief and did not connect with the naturalistic nuances of the text. As a result, responses tended toward the descriptive and lacked analytical detail and contextual understanding of the role(s) within the scene. Many candidates chose to write about their portrayal of Mia. In some cases, this was not developed and did not connect with the character arc across the whole play.

Despite the phrasing of the question, very few candidate responses explicitly referenced the play as a whole, remaining steadfastly focussed on the extract. The vast majority of candidates lacked the subject-specific vocabulary necessary to analyse their use of acting skills in a sophisticated manner. A lack of confidence in the ideas being presented was communicated by candidates repeating phrases containing the words *perhaps*, *maybe*, *could*. This showed uncertainty and a lack of conviction.

Candidates **must** write from the perspective of the performer, using first-person narrative.

It is essential that candidates communicate their interpretation and portrayal of the key role across the performance text as a whole, not just within the confines of the extract.

Use of quotations helps to define interpretation and portrayal, with pin-point accuracy.

**3 As a performer, discuss how you might interpret and portray one of the key roles in the extract.**

You should use examples from the extract to support your ideas and your answer should make reference to the performance text as a whole.

(16)

'That Face' by Polly Stanham is a play which realises and explores the devastating effects of mental illness and it's

effect on a family ✓

As a performer I would interpret and portray the role of Mrs in the extract. Within scene one, (the beginning of the extract) Mrs is experiencing an extremely stressful situation as her and school friend Izzy have drugged and forced an innocent 13 year old girl. Thus in the extract Mrs will be feeling many emotions and thoughts and in which to portray. One key feeling of Mrs's within scene one is to try and remain calm in the face of the disaster she has created by giving drugs to a 13 year old girl. Mrs's attempt at

a non-judgmental attitude within scene one is evident through the lines "It's not poison. It's a mild tranquilliser ... stops pain. Takes the edge of things" and "she's not unconscious, just super relaxed". Whilst performing these lines I believe Mrs would be extremely playful almost annoying to Izzy, who at this point is extremely stressed. I would pace round and round Izzy, with broad gestures to signal mildness "mild tranquilliser. stops pain". Furthermore I would mock the situation by relaxing my whole body but making my body language extremely loud and concerned. For example when I say "just super relaxed" I would bend over, crumpling my whole body, literally rocking the unconscious 13 year old trapped to a chair. Moreover I would deliver

my 122 extremely slowly, so as to show that  
Mira is not panicking in contrast to 122, who would be  
talking extremely frantically. ~~the relaxed~~ My relaxed  
portrayal of Mira would convey many things about the  
character to the audience, for example my slow  
and delayed delivery of lines could communicate that  
Mira may have suffered trauma's in the past and  
that she has become desensitised to situations such as  
the one she is in, furthermore Mira's annoying taunting  
attitude toward 122 may convey to the audience  
that Mira has had to stand up for herself in the  
past and thus this annoying attitude comes naturally to  
her.

This would be an accurate portrayal as far as within  
'That Face' Mira's mother Martha neglects her and attacks  
her leaving Mira to defend herself regularly. Other  
scenes of the script where Mira's bad girl attitude is shown  
are in a scene scene when Hannah returns and  
she and Mira talk about and talk as if Hannah will  
have to impress her and at the end of scene 2 when  
Mira talks to the note Henry leaves telling Martha he's  
going out, this shows that Mira thinks on drugs.

Another  
part of the extract which shows Mira's emotions is  
when she begins to turn on 122 as she is acting  
scared and is extremely worried about not becoming  
a perfect. Mira finds the whole situation hilarious



and her almost cruel taunting attitude can be seen through lines such as 'Sorry, it's just ... the perfect thing ... You've scared aren't you ... Good for the night, trembling in her pyjamas'. In a perfect performance I would make sure to go right up in Izzy's face thus ~~script~~ portraying a cold side to Mira, ~~by doing this~~ whilst during this I would be laughing in order to convey to the audience that Mira is now in control of the situation, to show that the power has shifted. Furthermore I would use hand gestures, such as making my hands shake whilst delivering lines such as "trembling in her pyjamas" to further convey Mira's shakiness and

to show how hitious she finds the situation. Mira's taunting actions will show to the audience that Mira can be independent in the way that she feels she always has to defend herself, as it shows when she looks Izzy out of context, furthermore Mira's snide remarks and shaky hand gestures will really communicate to the audience how when it is

necessary Mira can become extremely fiery and could be able to fight for herself. Mira's independent, fiery attitude is shown in scene eight when her and Martha find it opposite each other and Mira calls Martha a "heartless cunt". Furthermore in scene ~~8~~ <sup>five</sup> when Mira is ordering Izzy to leave her alone upstairs and goes on to have a row with

flaring about Muriel's wishes for returning to England.

One final thing in the extract which Mrs. Popenoe is fed up. Toward the end of scene one Izzy starts to relate to Muriel's disgust at her feelings towards the situation and so the power shifts back toward Izzy. At this point Mrs. Popenoe begins to get fed of the situation as can be seen through lines "Ooo scary... Yes, sir she neck salutes". At the end of the extract when Mrs. Popenoe clearly begins to get fed up it is important for me as a performer to realise Constantin Stanislavski's

method of naturalism in order to really make Muriel's emotion within the scene come alive. By using Stanislavski's method such as back story I can embrace Muriel's emotional past being left by her father and disowned by her mother to really make the scene's truth seem extremely emotional. For example when I deliver the first line "Yes, sir" I would roll my eyes and do an extreme overexaggerated salute in order to show Muriel's discontent with her current situation. I would also turn away from Izzy, thus presenting closed off and an early body language. Finally when the line "Ooo scary" is delivered I will almost spit at Izzy to show the growing hatred between the pair. Muriel's discontent in the situation will convey to the audience that Mrs. Popenoe to be in control and becomes angry when she isn't.

Furthermore Mia's sarcastic and exasperated nature will communicate fully Mia's heady teenage persona to the audience making them realise that Mia isn't to be messed with as she will turn on you in an instant. Mia's moody atmosphere can be seen in other areas of the script like, such as in scene 5 where she acts extremely coldly toward Hugh as if she ~~hates him~~ actually dislikes him and in scene 6 where Mia tells Henry after he gains the power in their debate that it is his fault that Martha is still suffering from mental illness.

In conclusion I would portray the role of Mia in the extract as a moody, angry, and distant teenage girl in order to show the pain Mia has suffered through her life and to communicate her independent nature.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Comments**

This is a Level 5 response. The candidate writes in a sophisticated and perceptive manner, addressing how they would interpret and portray the role of Mia from *That Face*.

Throughout, there is clear evidence of how the role will be interpreted, using textual references to inform creative choices. The candidate explores how these ideas are to be developed through the application of performance techniques, clearly defining intentions.

An understanding of the development of the role across the whole of the text is made explicit and connections are made between the extract and the whole text.

Throughout, this is expressed using comprehensive knowledge, subject-specific terminology and understanding. Articulate use of subject-specific knowledge ensures the quality of expression is sophisticated and that examples are analysed in fine detail.

The candidate writes from an informed perspective, using first person narrative as a performer to articulate personal creative choices.

14 marks



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Tip**

Use the text to inform your creative choices

Make connections between the extract and the wider text

## Question 4

In all instances, the performance texts present major challenges to the designer, as the plays move through a progression in time and place. This challenge is at the heart of the question and the focus for consideration. For an audience to make sense of the world of the play, these transitions must be made clear. It is the role of the designer to help ensure that this is done with precision.

For up to 16 marks in an AS Level examination, there is an expectation that candidates seeking to access higher level marks present well-rounded and considered responses developed to meet the specific demands of the question. They should offer sufficient examples to demonstrate to the examiner that their ideas could work in performance.

In many responses, there was a sense of candidates finding it difficult to make prepared ideas fit the demands of the question. Many candidates had thought about how design elements support characterisation, thematic ideas, and the creation of location etc. but they were unable to consider how to accommodate changes in time and/or place.

There were examples of candidates offering inappropriate or unworkable interpretations of the chosen text. In Question 4, the examination demands that they respond to the question as a designer: acknowledging the playwright's intentions and stage directions, whilst resolving the design challenges that transitions in time, and/or place, generate.

Candidates can be imaginative and make creative choices but their rationales must acknowledge the playwright's original intentions and be justified in terms of how these are honoured. Responses also need to extend beyond the extract to consider design implications for the whole play. The design rationale must reflect how the design elements can be used throughout the complete text, as well as the extract.

Where candidates found it difficult to justify their design, they tried to move too far away from the original or had not considered the whole text in their interpretation. Consequently, ideas were offered alongside examples of how the intended interpretation might work for the extract, but these could not be fully justified in relation to a whole production. In some instances, candidates provided in-depth, detailed design ideas which, whilst being imaginative and innovative, simply could not work on stage.

Some candidates did not refer to the play's title in their response and it was difficult to establish for which play the design rationale was intended, until some way into the response. This was indicative of the lack of focus regarding responses to this question.

A number of candidates were unable to focus on the requirements of the question and, rather than defining how design elements communicated a change in time and/or place, simply provided a prepared design rationale. The purpose of this part of examination is to gauge candidates' understanding of how design can be harnessed collaboratively, to communicate essential ideas within the text, and resolve design challenges presented by the playwright. Presenting an in-house design rationale can limit candidates' ability to think about the question being asked, creating one-size-fits-all responses. Candidates who did address the question were particularly convincing when discussing lighting, which was one of the most popular design elements, alongside set and costume design.

Successful candidates ensured a range of theatrical elements was encompassed, and that these were explored in detail. Candidates stated their intention clearly, placing audience understanding of transition at the heart of the response. Such responses had clarity, providing examiners with a clear sense of intentions dramatically, visually, and aurally.



Responses must extend beyond the extract to consider design implications for the whole play. The design rationale must reflect how the design elements can be used throughout the complete text, as well as the extract.

**4 As a designer, discuss how you would use theatrical elements to communicate changes in time and/or place in the extract.**

You should use examples from the extract to support your ideas and your answer should make reference to the performance text as a whole.

(16)

Theatrical elements are key ~~to~~ in plays of <sup>emphasis</sup> ~~emphasis~~ key moments or characters. Maximalist is an Expressionistic play so the use of sound and set will be heightened and ~~very~~ ~~more~~ not naturalistic to accommodate for the Expressionistic genre.

Using lighting as a designer I would communicate changes in place from the Helen and Richard to Helen and George by changing the lighting from dimly lit and romantic to stark lighting with a flickering bulb over Helen. This will be effective in showing the complete contrast in feelings Helen has towards Richard and George. The dimly lit romantic lighting signifies how Helen feels calm and intimate with Richard but when it is a case and she feels free. However the change into episode 7 Domestic will have a stark lighting. This will represent the complete shift in mindset of Helen as she now feels isolated, chaotic and conflicted. When George Helen feels George is too modern and too business-like represented by the stark lighting highlighting to the audience of Helen's reluctance to adapt into modern society with George pushing her to adapt but Richard

allowing her to feel free and relaxed. The flickering light will represent Helen's conflicted brain and her debate with herself as to whether to use the bottle with stones in on George just as Richard said he did in Episode 5. I also think a flickering light above Helen would occur in Episode 1: To Business as it would highlight Helen's isolation and difference from all the other office workers. It would symbolise Helen's reluctance to accept not only in her relationships but in her work place and highlight to the audience of her chaotic nature in an ~~overly~~ <sup>overly</sup> efficient workplace.

I would use sound as a key feature to communicate changes in time and place. In the first part of the extract with Richard I would have sounds of the sea as if they were next to water. I would have ~~an~~ a faint musician playing in the background playing a slow, jazz-like tune on the piano. These sounds would add to the calmness and serenity of the scene. This scene would completely contrast any other episode prior to it as for the first time Helen feels at peace. She feels that Richard is right for her not George. On the line 'you're pretty sweet' I would have the volume of the music increasing, adding to the romantic feel to the episode. However when Helen's 'eyes focused on the fish' I would have a eerie drone underneath the romantic music and

sea breeze. This would highlight to the audience that Helen has spotted the thing that ultimately causes her to die. The atmosphere needs to change so by using a eerie drone caused by a ~~was~~ Waterphone instrument the atmosphere would seem more foreboding rather than romantic.

As the extract changes from episode 6 to episode 7 the eerie drone ~~which~~ <sup>will</sup> continue as an under-tone for the whole episode. This will highlight to the audience not only of the complete contrast to ~~the~~ the previous episode of where it seemed very peaceful but also of the imminent death that is about to occur. One sound I would use to show changes in time / place is the sound of couples laughing together outside the window (offstage). This is significant as it shows ~~how~~ the contrast between the couples outside to the ~~can~~ couple inside. ~~and~~ The ~~to~~ sound will also be featured in Episode 3: Honeyman also highlighting the fact that actually the times haven't changed or progressed at all between Helen and George and still Helen feels isolated and alone compared to all the laughing couples outside even after all the time between the episodes 3 and 7.

In relation to set, my theme for the whole should be to have an oversized prop or part of the set in each episode



to represent how Helen feels overpowered and  
surrounded by life and by modern society. In  
the first part of the extract in Episode 6 the  
oversized item will be an oversized bowl with stones,  
votes and a life in. This is significant as it shows the  
audience from the outset of the episode, what the key  
prop is in the episode and the significance it has.  
Even though Helen only notices it when she says 'Can  
I have that' the audience are aware of it from the start.  
~~It is a prop that represents how Helen is~~

However, using just the oversized prop in the next  
part of the extract will be an oversized bottle with  
stones in next to the bed of the room Helen and George are in.

This shows a change in time as it shows how Helen has  
transferred the stones from the bowl to the stones in the  
bottle. It even shows Helen's thought process and how  
she has thought about killing George. This is a complete  
contrast to the first part of the extract where the stones  
were innocent in a plant compared to the stones in a  
murder weapon. This is effective to the audience as it  
clearly symbolises the obvious change in time of Helen's life  
and how she has thought deeply about what she is  
going to do. It also allows the audience with an insight into  
Helen's thoughts before she has thought them represented  
by the oversized props being there from the very start of  
the episodes.

In relation to costume, another recurring theme in my production is the use of signs around your neck to show who you belong to ~~and~~ for example in Episode 1 each sign ~~is~~ says 'A Property of George M. Jones' in which each office worker wears. However in the first part of the extract in Episode 6, Helen isn't wearing the sign she is wearing a necklace with criminal stones. This is significant as it shows a clear shift in time from the first few episodes when she is 'Property of George M. Jones' to now when she feels liberated with criminal stones representing the sin she will commit in coming episodes. In the second part of the extract, Helen is still wearing the stones but on the line 'the property's mine' ~~and~~ I will have George trying to place the sign with 'Property of George M. Jones' on Helen. This shows a ~~the~~ change in time as Helen is now feels she is no longer property of George but George is still trying to control her representing the male dominated society of the 1920s. It shows a true sense of Helen's freedom by the fact she is wearing stones now not the sign however the criminal represents the sin that Helen commits and ultimately ~~the~~ her execution and lack of ever being truly free.



## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Comments

This is a Level 4 response to *Machinal*, which is assured and moving towards sophisticated. A range of ideas is presented under a rationale defined as Expressionistic.

Whilst lighting examples lack subject-specific terminology, a clear sense of intention for the audience is provided and all ideas are justified. The use of oversized props as a focal point and signs to dehumanise and denote ownership, are presented in an assured and confident manner.

The candidate addresses the question, focussing upon how transition will be communicated. All design rationale decisions are defined and justified in a response that is holistic.

There is an awareness of the themes and issues that are evident throughout the complete text, as well as social, cultural and historical factors.

The connection with the wider text could have been made more explicit.

12 marks



## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Tip

Your design ideas must be practicable and workable

## Paper Summary

In preparation for the examination, centres should provide candidates with opportunities to practise writing under timed conditions, to ensure they are capable of producing well-developed responses in the time available.

Centres should ensure that candidates' subject-specific vocabulary is well-developed, allowing them to express their judgements in a precise and articulate manner.

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Candidates **must** address the question that is set and consider the focus at the heart of the question
- It is essential that candidates communicate how their ideas connect across the performance text as a whole, not just within the confines of the extract
- Use of quotations helps to define interpretation with pin-point accuracy: these could include any stage directions provided by the playwright
- It is important that the candidate honours the playwright's original intentions and references stage directions, whilst resolving the design challenges transitions in time and/or place that they generate
- Candidates can be imaginative and make creative choices but their rationales must acknowledge the playwright's original intentions and be justified in terms of how these are honoured

## Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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