

Examiners' Report

June 2019

GCE Drama 9DR0 03

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Introduction

This is the second year of examination for this Component (9DR0/03) Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice.

The component takes the form of a two and a half hour written examination and requires candidates to consider, analyse and evaluate how different theatre makers create impact. Throughout the component, candidates will have studied how production ideas and dramatic elements are communicated to an audience from the perspective of a director, a performer and a designer as well as an informed member of an audience themselves.

There are three areas to be covered:

- Section A: A live theatre evaluation (20 Marks)
- Section B: Page to Stage: realisation of a complete performance text (18 marks + 18 marks = 36 marks)
- Section C: Interpreting one complete performance text, in light of one practitioner for a contemporary audience (24 marks).

There is an AS Drama and Theatre qualification which some of the cohort may have sat in the preceding year and centres will recognise that Sections A and B have very similar content to the AS level paper. (The AS qualification will only be offered for one more year in 2020)

Section A: Live theatre evaluation

Section A gives candidates a choice of questions which are designed to give opportunities to discuss performance elements as well as design elements. At the heart of the question is a statement that invites a personal response from the candidate, whilst analysing what they have seen or heard, and then going on to evaluate it. Perceptive evaluation cannot really occur without detailed analysis and candidates responded enthusiastically to this challenge.

The most popular performances written about included a number of plays that have been around for some time now: *Things I Know to be True*, *The Woman in Black* and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*. Other popular performances evaluated included: *The Unreturning*, *Wise Children*, *The Jungle*, *Ear for Eye* and *Trainspotting*. Theatre companies covered included: Frantic Assembly, Splendid Theatre and Kneehigh with Frantic Assembly being the most popular representing three of the current most seen productions.

Occasionally, candidates were writing about productions they had seen several years ago and these responses often lacked the depth and detail afforded by a performance seen more recently. A small number of candidates had perhaps seen a two-hander with limited production values or a local amateur production with reduced production values and they were often at a disadvantage.

Unfortunately, some candidates wrote about musicals that contained no dialogue and so were unable to meet the required demands of this Drama and Theatre specification which is quite clear that sung-through productions are not allowed. Similarly, a few candidates wrote about a touring production of *Equus* that they may have seen with a view to Section B. Again, it is very clear in the specification that the plays on the set text lists cannot be used for Section A. It is heartening to see that drama teachers are still giving up so much of their own time to take candidates to the theatre.

Question 1 was slightly more popular than Question 2 and was argued against so passionately that it was heartening to think that live theatre had made such an impact. Very few candidates expressed a dislike for the production they had seen and even if they did, this had no impact on the quality of their response. However, where they had particularly enjoyed the production, this passion seemed to elicit a stronger response particularly when connecting to the statement. Many candidates were exceptionally passionate about the first statement stating that they were born in the 21st century which firmly located them as young people in a modern world.

Higher scoring responses demonstrated wider socio-political aspects that reflected on them as individuals, often commenting on how themes and issues resonated with their lives. The strongest responses were those which placed the statement at the heart of the response and then wove their discussion of a range of theatrical methods around it. Some candidates struggled to move beyond the lower levels due to a lack of precision in their analysis and evaluation, often making sweeping statements in order to move onto their next point.

Repeated references to the statement helped keep students on track and ensured that they were responding to the question. This was a trait of higher level answers. Repeating the statement and then citing key moments with the support of the 500 words that students are allowed to take into the examination room with them seemed to be the logical way to approach Question 1 or 2.

Students had been particularly well prepared for this section and some stated that they had seen the production several times, such was their enjoyment of it. Clearly, higher level responses contained depth and detail about a range of key moments as well as the roles of different theatre makers. Both questions could be answered from the viewpoint of a performer or designer, according to preference and most responses covered a range of production values and the contribution of different theatre makers. Examiners had no pre-conceived ideas about the statements, but were pleased to report that the vast majority of young people felt that live theatre really could connect to their lives. Overall, it is heartening to realise that so many young people do care about the poverty gap, injustice, the plight of migrants and the well being of our planet and can creatively see how theatre can be didactic as well as entertaining.

Section B: Page to Stage: Realising a Performance text.

Candidates must practically explore a performance text to consider how theatrical ideas might be realised in performance and communicated to an audience. They must write about one of the texts below:

- *Accidental Death Of An Anarchist*
- *Colder Than Here*
- *Equus*
- *Fences*
- *Machinal*
- *That Face*.

The texts cannot be taken into the examination room. Candidates are given an unseen extract which they should place at the heart of their response. They are asked to consider a possible staging of the selected unseen extract and the intended impact their creative ideas will have on an audience. *Machinal* and *Equus* remain the most popular texts but there were definitely a lot more candidates writing about *That Face* and *Colder Than Here*. Examiners also reported more examples

from *Fences* and *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* but they are still the least studied. There was nothing in the responses seen to suggest that any one text leant itself to the questions more readily than any other. This section of the examination gives no choice of question: candidates have to respond as both a performer and as a designer. Examiners felt that question 3, where candidates were in the role of a performer, was much better answered than question 4, where they assume the role of a designer.

These questions also ask candidates to make reference to the performance text as a whole. Stronger responses were able to connect moments from the extract to the rest of the performance text. Sophisticated responses demonstrated the playwright's craft of foreshadowing as well as suggesting a range of possible scenarios to the audience that would later make theatrical sense. Question 3 clearly states that they are the performer ('As a performer...') and the majority of candidates had really grasped this this year and wrote in the first person. Sometimes a candidate would lapse into the role of a director when they said things such as 'I would get the actor playing the role of the Dysart to use their voice...'. They are not a director in Section B, they are a performer or a designer and as such must write as if they were that particular theatre maker. Many candidates wrote in multiple voices throughout their response, sometimes as the performer and sometimes as the director and this could lead to muddled ideas which limited their overall performance. Some candidates wrote exclusively about the extract which meant they had not referred to the rest of the text. Others wrote about the whole text, but did not specifically reference the extract which was limiting for a different reason. Higher scoring candidates readily connected the extract to the rest of the performance text and were clear about how they would communicate effectively with the audience or develop visual impact.

A clear working knowledge of the performance text is essential to success and many candidates had an impressive idea of exactly how they would stage their chosen performance text and had well crafted responses to being both a performer and a designer. Some centres appeared to have developed a collective staging concept which is understandable, but personal responses with the student's own voice coming through were the most plausible and interesting.

Finally, there was a noticeable increase in candidates using quotations from the extract to structure their response and, while this isn't a requirement, it could be seen to give a logical structure to support them.

Section C : Theatre Makers in Practice : Interpreting a Performance Text

Candidates must practically explore a complete performance text in the light of a chosen practitioner in order to outline and justify their ideas for a production concept. They must write about one of the texts below:

- *Antigone*
- *Doctor Faustus* *
- *Hedda Gabler*
- *Lysistrata* *
- *The Maids*
- *The School for Scandal*
- *The Tempest*
- *Waiting for Godot*

- *Woyzeck*. *

* These are carry-over texts from the legacy qualification and are available as a free download from the Edexcel website. It is recommended that students use these editions.

The practitioner must come from one of the list below:

- Artaud
- Brecht
- Berkoff
- Complicite
- Kneehigh
- Joan Littlewood
- Punchdrunk
- Stanislavski.

The most popular texts for this section continue to be *Woyzeck* and *Lysistrata*, followed by *Hedda Gabler* then *Antigone*. A very small number of *The Maids* and *The Tempest* were reported with even fewer examples of *Waiting for Godot* and *School for Scandal* seen.

Popular practitioners were Kneehigh, Punchdrunk and Brecht although all the others were seen even if it was in small numbers. Stanislavski was popular, particularly with *Hedda Gabler*, although some responses dwelt too long on rehearsal techniques rather than their overall performance concept. Some students struggled with the choice of practitioner when their methodologies didn't sit easily with the choice of playtext. There were some notable examples of Joan Littlewood being used and this proved to be very effective.

Students respond to one question from a choice of two.

Students take clean copies of their chosen text into the examination room with them, then respond to an unseen named extract as well as to the rest of the play. They already know that they will be asked to respond 'As a director...' and it was notable that many higher-level responses kept this phrase running throughout their answer. Students must also research the original performance conditions and show relevant knowledge and understanding of the social, cultural and historical factors that are central to the original text. High scoring students used this information particularly well, connecting the past to the present with insight and respect for the playwright's intentions. They were aware of the staging implications from 'then and now' as well as cultural shifts in recent years in relation to a 21st century audience.

Some students seemed intent in getting their concept down on paper at the expense of focusing on the question which was (Q5) how they would communicate effectively or (Q6) how they would explore stage space. Question 5 was significantly more popular than Question 6. Similarly, some students wrote exclusively about the extract which meant they had not referred to the rest of the text. Others, wrote about the whole text but did not specifically reference the extract which was

limiting for a different reason. Higher scoring students readily connected the extract to the rest of the performance text.

The more successful responses tended to choose a practitioner that was more suited to the performance text. The concept also has to be seen to work in practical terms and with due regard to health and safety. Punchdrunk and Artaud in particular, sometimes exposed the audience to pretty gruelling experiences which in some cases were dangerous and/or unworkable. For example, one concept had the audience locked into small rooms which made it difficult to imagine how this could possibly be safe.

Candidates were clearly enthused by their chosen text and there was clear evidence of centres preparing them well for the demands of the question(s).

Responses ranged from 3 to 7 pages in length. There were some strong responses that were just too short to warrant the higher levels either because they had not discussed ideas in enough depth or not had enough time to cover the demands of the question in sufficient detail. Sketches were used, but sometimes these were up to half a page and did not really add to the response while others diagrams were integrated in to a well written response, particularly for question 6.

In this section more than any other there was a sense of a 'prepared' answer with some candidates not mentioning the focus at all until the final paragraph or 'bolting on' a comment about the question focus.

Weaker students often referred to the OPC and regurgitated information from their notes and used the points out of the context of the question or the example they were discussing. Simplistic application of OPC with dates and names didn't always work supportively for the candidate.

Some candidates struggled to justify their ideas and tended to describe what they would do without regard for the desired impact on the audience. Some students discussed the whole performance text and therefore gave little evidence of what they would do with the unseen extract.

There are numerous aspects to this section and many candidates were unable to cover all of them, which meant often it became a mark of 'best fit'. Along with practitioner, most candidates successfully referenced the extract, but a large number failed to bring the wider performance text into discussion. At times, there was no discussion at all of a concept beyond it being a "naturalistic performance". For example, OPC was often absent from responses or presented as a 'history lesson'. Some candidates did discuss how it had informed/inspired ideas or how they were paying homage to original intentions. Unfortunately, some practitioners did not always support the texts chosen by the centre. There were a very small number of responses that had used **a practitioner that wasn't on the set list** which meant that all references to the practitioner could not be awarded any marks.

The practitioner's methodologies need to be supportive to the text that is being studied.

Examiners found it interesting to see which text had been paired with which practitioner. This tended to have a direct bearing on how successful the concept was. Often the practitioner, although mentioned in the introduction, was forgotten or attached infrequently as an afterthought but was not integral. It is important that centres reflect carefully on how the practitioner links to the chosen play.

Lysistrata is still throwing up the least plausible concepts - rival football fans or gangs, The Troubles in Ireland scenario is still seen a great deal with many almost identical concepts; what these seemed to lack was any sense of humour or comedic moments which distanced the concept from Aristophanes' original aims.

There were many excellent responses to *Woyzeck* with ideas which seemed sincere in their awareness of the poverty issue. These were always well researched. PTSD and mental health issues were definitely more prevalent supported by some well researched statistics. There were many other concepts connected to current affairs using world leaders as the protagonist or antagonist but these were only really successful when the ideas really did have a connection to the playwrights original intentions. The more successful students were able to root their responses in the extract given and then discuss other moments from the play text. There were some really interesting directorial interpretations that were imaginative and were clearly presented for a contemporary audience. Successful students were able to keep their directorial concept at the root of the response while also addressing the other elements. The theories and methodologies of key practitioners were mostly all successfully understood and clearly connected to the student's own concepts.

Question 1

On the whole, candidates had a strong reaction to this statement and it is reassuring that most candidates disagreed with the statement, and were passionate in their defence of the relevance of theatre.

The best responses broke down their theatrical experience allowing the examiner to visualise the production through their analysis: responses were also written in a personal voice. Some candidates found it useful to define their understanding of the statement in their introduction with many stating that they epitomise a 21st century audience and as such, wrote confidently about how the production engaged/excited/entertained them and their contemporaries.

There was a balance to be struck between the play and the production. The question is primarily concerned with the latter. Many candidates argued it was the themes of the play that connected to a 21st century audience while also being able to methodically analyse and evaluate a wide range of theatrical elements across several impactful moments. Confident candidates analysed how set, lights, sound, costume, props and acting enhanced particular moments and then drew this back to the statement. They interwove well-argued debate about the place of theatre in society with evaluative comments on the theatre makers.

Stronger responses also explored the question in depth with consideration of what 'out of touch' could mean. They considered how the theatrical elements in the performance were working together to make an impact; e.g. some excellent responses to *War Horse* captured how the work of the puppeteers linked into the visual projection to create powerful moments for the audience.

Due to the directed nature of the statement, candidates were able to make conclusions that were personal and socially specific to them. Higher level responses demonstrated wider socio-political awareness that reflected on them as individuals, often commenting on how themes and issues resonated with their lives, i.e. transgender, international politics as well as topical issues such as climate change.

Some candidates struggled to move beyond the lower levels due to a lack of precision in their analysis and evaluation, often making sweeping statements in order to move onto their next point.

A number of candidates struggled with the balance of analysis and evaluation, favouring one over the other. Some productions seen did not sit easily with the demands of the specification. There were some in-house theatre in education productions which limited the candidates' ability to discuss a range of production values. Similarly, pantomime and musicals can make it very challenging to respond in depth and detail to a question that reflects the Assessment Objectives of the A level Drama and Theatre qualification.

Weaker responses took a narrative approach, for example telling the story of *Curious Incident* and *Things I know to be true* in such detail it left little room to address the statement and question. Some candidates gave detailed and articulate responses which focused on how plot lines and characters spoke to them as 21st century audience members. This approach was too literary and not based on live performance seen. Weaker candidates lacked evaluation.

Examiners did report they had seen fewer responses with pre-prepared paragraphs that then had little connection to the statement. A few students really struggled to provide evidence of what happened on stage during the production. Others lacked the ability to use drama and theatre terminology or write a sufficient amount to develop their argument and cite enough key moments.

The opening paragraph to this question is personal and passionate and makes such a strong opener to the response. It is really clear that theatre matters to this candidate.

I totally disagree with the statement that 'Theatre in the 21st century is out of touch with its audience'. Theatre in the 21st century, has been consistent in, being monumental with touching it's audience by making them more aware and engage in theatre through the enhanced theatrical elements 21st century theatre displays today.

Whilst watching the play 'Jane Eyre' I was stunned by the character 'Cicely' (later introduced as Mr Rochester's wife) costume. The richness of her silk red gown, contrasted her from the gloomy atmospheric set. Her



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Examiner Comments

The first extract is confident and bold. There can be no doubt about how this candidate feels about the production in relation to the statement.

The second extract is focussing on specific elements (key moment) from the production. Even using the word 'stunned' gets across the enthusiasm and engagement that the candidate has.



Formulate some personal sentences about the theatre production you intend to write about. What impact did it have on you and why?

Be clear and honest about how you felt about it.

Use the statement to help you structure your response.

This candidate scored full marks with a really well-developed response that kept coming back to the statement while analysing and evaluating numerous key moments throughout Stephen Daldry's production of 'An Inspector Calls'.

Sometimes it's the number of key moments that gain marks, while at other times it's the depth of detail in a small number of examples.

the politically fuelled play, was published after the second world war, but set in 1912, two years before the First world war. Likely the play was written to ensure a Labour majority in the 1945 election. The moral and ethical discussion posed is certainly relevant to a 21st century audience. Further, Daldry's choice to exemplify the social class divisions through the set, setting the play in a large Edwardian style house here, instead of the original drawing room, suggests we best audiences would better resonate with the play if it were visually engaging. There in light of the statement, my essay will serve as a counter, contradictory argument - I believe

theatre in the 21st century is very much in touch with its audience.

steed on stilts. Mrs Birling, played by Christine Kavanagh displayed her disgust at ~~be~~ being forced out of her home, and onto what was perceived to be the 'working-class', less wealthy ~~the~~ street-level, through her use of gesture. Her posture suggested her aristocratic and upper class background, which was intended to be stereotypical of an Edwardian Upper-Class woman. This combined with her use of facial expression, which was a raised, tilted-head, her face and nose spindled and her mouth in an upright look of disgust, made her an incredibly unlikeable character. Daudy's deliberate choice to characterise Sybil as an upper-class stereotype, united the audience against her as her feelings of 'disgust' were unwarranted and ~~showed~~ ^{displayed} her lack of empathy for Eva Smith's suicide. I believe Daudy captured through this united audience feeling, J.B Priestley's socialist 'community' agenda, given

which the play so ~~signif~~ crucially hangs upon. The modern adaptation which forced



Extract 1 addresses the statement, demonstrates a confident knowledge of the play and in this case, the historical and political purpose.

Extract 2 is a superb example of how small details such as gestus can be analysed and evaluated to great effect.



Write lots of practise essays for your teacher/lecturer to mark. Imagine that you are showcasing the production and have to sell key moments to someone that hasn't seen it. Details should be accurate and vivid.

Trainspotting Live was a popular choice of production used for Section A and this example shows how the candidate found the genre engaging as well as the play itself. This extract was taken from a response that was awarded full marks.

mood between Actor and Audience. I felt personally in touch with the performance which as a result made me feel more evoked when death and domestic violence was later portrayed in the play. It created closeness foreshadowing the topic of drug addiction creating a sense that it can happen to me or the person sitting across from me. The Theatre staging, broke the fourth wall and made it impossible to turn away. The breaking of boundaries in this performance made it impossible for me not to be fully committed into the experience or feel in touch with the performance as the immersion made it impossible for me or audience members to think that we weren't similar. It conveyed we are all just people making the social message of Taboo Subject hit me hard emotionally. Adam



This was part of a detailed and impassioned response to the play 'Trainspotting' where the candidate has used the immersive experience itself as a connection to theatre goes in the 21st century.



It is good to respond personally as a member of the audience, but some candidates successfully consider other members of the audience and the impact the play might have had on them. Some also embrace the idea of a 21st century audience to mean 'society today' and this too can work successfully when put in context.

Question 2

The focus of this question was 'Actors are nothing without Designers'.

The majority of candidates offered a balanced reaction to this statement and it worked equally well for actors and designers and, indeed, the analysis and contrast of both together. The majority of candidates were able to offer the names of designers and actors. The analysis of key moments could have been further developed in some responses that favoured evaluation and didn't allow the examiner to visualise what was occurring through set, lighting, costume, sound, staging and acting.

For this section, some plays lent themselves better to the questions than others.

Some candidates chose statement two for a production that had few technical aspects and this was limiting.

Lighting, costume, set design and sound were the most commonly referred to design skills.

Many candidates acknowledged the director's influences and how design and acting supported each other in the modern theatre. The more successful answers here tended to disagree 'to an extent' with the statement. Successful answers were focused on the design elements in the performance and how it enhances the performance for the audience, but also references actors and moments in the production where the acting was effective.

The strongest answers were those where candidates were also able to identify moments of theatre created by the performers and how these were compared, contrasted and balanced by lighting, sound or set.

Higher-scoring responses often followed a structure whereby candidates referred to the statement and then analysed and evaluated a key moment from the production seen before repeating this pattern several more times.

There were some successful responses to 'Curious Incident' which gave candidates plenty to discuss about design and key moments in the play. Likewise, *A Woman in Black* that argued for both sides of the statement. Balanced discussion, in some cases, produced assured responses.

A large majority remained in Level 3 because the key moments were not appropriated linked to the statement.

Other candidate responses leaned more towards an analytical and evaluative response to moment of technical use and then balanced this with 'but the acting shone through'.

There were some very well constructed responses to *The Unreturning* and *Curious Incidents* and candidates responded well to Frantic's ideas and their use of technology as a support rather than a 'be-all and end-all'. A number of pertinent and intelligent comments from candidates related to the experience of watching Punchdrunk and how the technology became a key part of the show.

Weaker responses sometimes pursued the line that the acting was 'so good it didn't need the designers', or the reverse, and missed the need to consider how both work together to create powerful moments in performance.

The majority of candidates approached this question using a balance of analysis of design and acting. There were also moments where candidates used specific theatrical moments to draw

conclusions as to how design and acting provided a combined semiotic within the whole mise-en-scene.

The opportunity to focus specifically on the technical aspects of the performance appealed to many and produced some effective analysis of the impact of a range of theatrical values on the audience.

This question gave candidates the opportunity to evaluate a given key moment and focus on how actors and designers complemented each other.

This is evident in the examples given here.

An example which really showcases how actors are nothing without designers would be the witches introduction in the opening of the play. Here we see the witches climb up large poles placed around stage, with pre-recorded dialogue echoing around the theatre with a reverb, creating an immersive atmosphere and ~~create~~ an unnatural and mystical mood.

It is here we see the collaboration of theatre makers and designers, director Rufus Norris and sound designer Paul Arditi, working together to create a mystical atmosphere and to push the themes of supernatural within Macbeth, these themes would not have been clear without Arditi's sound design, reinforcing how Actors would be nothing without designers. I adored how we as the audience became instantly trapped within the story, due to the soundfield being so large and echoing



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The names of actors and designers give this response a confident, knowledgeable tone that shows that the candidate has done their research.



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Keep the words **analyse** and **evaluate** in your mind as these are the key words in the question and the examiner is looking for examples of this.

Not only that, Stoodleys ~~set~~ featured a clear use of levels ~~set~~ with a solid wooden beams between floors. This was effective as LV spent the majority of her time upstairs with Murr downstairs. This was effective and ~~se~~ supports the statement as the set distinguished ~~the~~ the clear divide between the two characters to me and the audience and instantly highlighted the distant and volatile relationship between the mother and ~~the~~ daughters. Without Stoodleys ~~the~~ wonderful execution of set design, this wouldn't have been possible thus highlighting how actors are nothing without designers.

This extract comes from a production of 'Little Voice' where the candidate has used design elements to lead the response, stating how this supported key moments for the actors.

full story. As a young citizen of the UK who has not had the opportunity to visit the Jungle in Calais, I felt as though the camp had been brought to me. This aspect of design creating an impact on the audience from the very beginning of the play is hugely important in order to ensure the full attention and interest of those watching. This in turn made the acting on-stage come alive and on the whole made the story far more believable, drawing out my empathetic side. This is not to say that actors can't exist without designers, but the aid of specific design elements helps to bring a piece of theatre to life, therefore making it more memorable than if it was just a ~~purely~~ stripped back performance of ~~acting~~ pure acting.

With John Clark's lighting design, upstage spots were shining brightly behind a gauze for this same eviction and were diffused by dry ice, used for its resemblance to tear gas. This detailed design for this scene made me feel ^{as though I was} part of the action on-stage. The bright lights that flashed at the audience stunned me and struck me with fear. The intention behind this idea was to make sure the audience felt the same emotions as the characters did, almost as though we were joining them on their traumatic journey. Without those elements of design used in this scene, I would not have been as emotionally invested or empathetical towards the characters throughout the rest of the play and therefore I would say that designers at certain points within plays most definitely play a more important role than actors. However, I do believe that they need each other in order to create maximum ~~effect~~ impact on the audience, as the Jungle most definitely did for me.

In conclusion, both actors and designers play an incredibly important role within live theatre, but I do believe that actors need some form of design, ^{within their play} whether it be set, lighting, costume or sound, in order to exert maximum impact and allow space for relatability and empathy.



Some candidates were fortunate enough to see 'The Jungle', a production that had so much to write about for either Section A question.



This candidate has crossed a few words out which is fine; sometimes candidates panic and cross out huge sections. Try and avoid doing this, the examiner may be able to credit you with a few marks even if you thought it was not relevant.

The second extract is a fantastic example of detail that makes the examiner see and understand exactly what was happening on stage at that moment. It is reasoned and balanced and addresses the question and the statement .

The third extract from this candidate is a really strong and clear conclusion. Many candidates don't have time to give a conclusion, and it certainly isn't essential, but it does demonstrate excellent time-management and rounds off a really strong response. This candidate gained full marks.

Question 3

Almost all candidates successfully answered as a performer, writing in the first person. This was a noticeable improvement from last year. Most of them covered a range of performance skills, often within a holistic manner which allowed the responses to develop more logically. Candidates often wrote effectively about their portrayal of a character especially when they were talking about emotions and how these affected their relationship with another character. There were very few responses written in the third person which was encouraging.

Most responses evidenced excellent knowledge of the set text and the characters within the given extract. Strong candidates connected their analysis of what they would do and why to specific moments from the extract.

The most common mistake was not giving wider knowledge of the whole text or not using it effectively within the response. Whilst the focus was on **one** character, candidates often considered their chosen character in isolation and missed the opportunity to consider their reactions/responses to other characters on stage.

Candidates were less successful when they simply listed examples of how their chosen character would use performance skills within the extract. Whilst candidates generally chose significant moments and used quotes from the extract to justify their choices, they were not always offering the necessary depth of discussion to access the higher levels. Conversely there were some superb examples where candidates had considered several key moments from the text as a whole (before the exam) that could logically be connected to any other part of the play. These moments were really well considered and highly supportive to the response overall, commonly using a statement such as; 'this would contrast with my interaction with... earlier in the play in which I...'. Candidates who used quotations and / or specific moments from the extract were able to write with more depth.

A few candidates responded as a director (Section C) with some still offering ideas for rehearsal techniques.

Weaker candidates struggled to place the extract within the context of the whole play and wrote responses that ignored the specific extract altogether.

Some candidates gave a general account of how they would play the character throughout the play or gave a literary account of the play. These answers were less successful. The most successful answers had taken note of the question focus 'interact with at least one other performer' and had returned to this throughout their response. Competent responses tended to use a formulaic approach of highlighting an approach to a moment in the extract and then writing a few lines about the impact on the audience.

When referencing the wider play, some candidates chose to make thematic connections, i.e. Mia as a product of both her father's neglect and Martha's emotional distance. This was felt to be credible in making a contextual connection with the whole play.

Equus answers were better as Dysart's appearance in this scene offers a range of potential for an actor to use semiotics to communicate inner turmoil and the contrast between this and his professional persona as well as his emotional turmoil. With regards to *That Face*, the majority of responses focused on Mia and how a performer might convey feelings of resentment and rebelliousness as well as masking her true self to appear differently to her father.

The real key to success on this particular question was to write 'As a performer...'. Candidates who

used quotations and/or specific moments from the extract were able to write with more depth.

This candidate has used *Fences* putting him or herself in the role of Rose. As the extract only contained 2 characters, they had to show how Rose would interact with Troy.

my tone will switch to anger, and my volume will become loud, in comparison to ~~be~~ previously having a somber tone and quiet volume. This will consequently communicate to Troy that I am becoming more and more angry of his affair the more I think of it. Rose's anger in this moment is a result of her confusion as to why Troy would do this to her, and later in the extract, she becomes increasingly more angry when thinking about the other woman. When delivering the line "Maybe you ought to go on and stay down there with her..." I will use the gesture of shoving Troy on the shoulder, to mirror the fact that I am trying to push him ~~away~~ away after finding out what he has done, to communicate that I no longer want to be near him. I will also show little eye contact towards Troy to communicate to him that I am unable to even look him in the eye after knowing what he has done, and understanding how much this will affect their relationship which, following this moment, begins to deteriorate, where it is later revealed that they do not talk for months.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

Although this response only scored 12/18 overall placing it just in to the 'Assured' level, there was a confident and appropriate understanding of what Rose needed to communicate. She also links it to the the consequences of this scene which impact on the rest of the play.



Be clear about connecting moments you have spent time writing about in the exam, to other moments before or after the extract.

This extract from 'Machinal' just has the young woman and the man in it (Episode 6). The example given here shows the kind of precise detail that typifies a 'Sophisticated' response. There is no doubt that this candidate knows exactly what they need to do as a performer at this precise moment.

about being caught up in the moment. ~~She~~ I will furrow my eyebrows and gather a huge smile, revealing my teeth as I shake my hips side to side, holding the man's hands, creating a close and intimate interaction. At this particular moment, the audience are exposed to the young woman's change in behaviour as she demonstrates elements of affection and passion, in contrast to her interaction with her husband previously.



Responses that have very precise details invariably show a great connection to, and understanding of, the text. Use details to tell the examiner how closely you have studied the playtext.



Always remember to explain **why** you would act something in a particular way.

'Colder Than Here' was an increasingly popular text this year. In the given extract, father and daughter, Jenna and Alec are alone together in a civil cemetery.

As this scene is set in December and

it is a noticeably cold I will adopt a constant shiver within my physicality. Furthermore emphasized with a weighted, hunched posture to connote to the idea of hugging myself.

This further alludes to the fact Jenna, needs comfort and warmth at this time.

As the stage directions highlight, "a tissue in her hand," I will proceed to grip the tissue in my hand and lightly sniff with my nose, to allude to the cold environment. By the

As Jenna asks, "could they do better for her in hospital? Maybe if we bullied her together," I will adopt a more upright posture as I question the idea of Mera, going to hospital. This echoes the concept of



In this extract, the candidate starts off in a more holistic sense, with an awareness of Jenna's character in the play as a whole and then in this scene/situation. This candidate goes on to give minute details after this more general introduction to how Jenna will be played in the scene.

In the second extract, the candidate uses quotations from the extract to help structure the response which can be a really good idea.



Remember that any given extract is a part of the whole play; don't lose focus about whereabouts the extract sits within the bigger picture of the play.

If you are struggling to get started with this question, use a quotation from the extract so you can outline how you would perform it.

Question 4

This question was the least well answered in 2018 and examiners felt that centres had made real efforts to improve candidates' technical and design skills for their chosen text this year.

Most candidates had a reasonable knowledge of design terminology and were able to consider how the extract could be enhanced through the use of design elements.

As the question asked for 'visual impact', the vast majority of candidates chose lighting as the **one** theatrical element followed by costume and set design. There were some very strong answers in terms of the technical vocabulary used – and some brilliantly creative answers. Some candidates fell down when they were so intent on getting their design ideas down, they omitted to reference the extract and/or the rest of the play.

Some candidates chose to use quotations from the extract to structure their response and this often served them well. There were some candidates who struggled when discussing 'visual impact' and simply described lighting states and use of gels without referencing the impact it would have had on the audience. Again, many candidates made very few, if any, references to the wider play.

Strong candidates were confident in using subject specific terminology. Weaker candidates wrote very little or made sweeping generalisations about the colour of a scene without any analysis of how a theatre maker creates that effect on stage.

There were still many tentative responses to this question, some of which were inappropriate where candidates were trying to be too different and not serving the needs of the play or responses that were glib and superficial. Overall, these responses tended to be short.

Some candidates referred to more than one theatrical element, which limited their opportunity to delve deeper into the application of the element. Some candidates were not able to provide the analytical detail required to evidence their approach to the visual design. A few candidates attempted to relate sound design to visual impact; this was rarely successful, as the candidates could not relate their ideas back to the question.

Subject specific terminology was better than last year – especially where candidates had written about lighting. Successful answers were detailed and gave examples of how the element was utilised by the actors – this was mostly seen in answers that focused on costume as a theatrical element. There was evidence of 'class concepts' and design ideas heavily influenced by live productions of the text seen by the candidates. These varied in success – where candidates understood the reasons for design decisions, the answer reflected this. However, some candidates struggled to justify the design decisions.

Responses to this question seemed to create the greatest divide: they were often very strong or very weak, the latter to the point of almost non-existent responses of around a side of A4 in the answer booklet.

Centres have told us that the inclusion of a Design question is to be applauded, but have also recognised that this is an area that may need to be addressed more closely in the classroom.

Accidental Death of an Anarchist produced some excellent responses. Most candidates had a good understanding of the play's political context as well as a good grasp of Commedia dell'Arte.

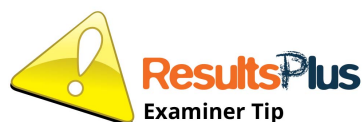
Lighting was the most frequently used design element for Question 4.

When the Mamma introduces the focus on the discussion on 'the suspect's leap', I would introduce dramatic blue beam lights with cinemoid gels and a widened iris, creating the illusion of a game show. This would visually emphasise the ridiculous, unrealistic nature of the police's ~~to~~ lies through the artificial colour, also visually suggesting to the audience that the police's version of events is far from the truth. This would be heightened through a light blue wash, exaggerating this visual impact and inducing humour in the audience, encouraging them to view the police as

incompetent and of low status, being manipulated by



This candidate had an almost forensic approach to the lighting design and their enthusiasm for using lighting to enhance particular lines and moments in the play made this a top band response.



Technical expertise makes any response to question 4 more meaningful, accurate and relevant. A sophisticated response will show how a design element can really support the play's ideas as well as the acting, at any given moment.

'That Face' produced some extremely detailed responses. This is a 21st century text which invariably requires 21st century set and costume. Some candidates think it is very easy to design for a contemporary (2007) text mistaking the fact that the design elements are every bit as important as a more traditional text.

takes place downstage right. My chosen theatrical element I will write about is set. The table will be set downstage right and dressed with the appropriate set dressings including a white table cloth and the silver cutlery. The table has two chairs positioned at either end and also has a small vase containing an artificial rose and a candle (which for health and safety would also be fake) in a jar.

When Mia questions if the cutlery is real silver, "Is this real silver?", she is still sat at the table. The chair she is sat on is also made of dark mahogany to match the table but once again features the same damages. The legs of the chair do not match the legs of the table and are instead straight, square legs as shown the

mismatch within their family (with the chair representing Hugh as it is less damaged). The chairs have been reupholstered with a cheap faux leather in order to try 'maintain' them and keep them looking expensive and polished however this has failed and fails to hide the real damage to the chair. Mia's chair has one leg slightly shorter than the others so her chair sits on an angle slightly smaller to Hugh's as she still feels inferior to him and is vulnerable as she is alone and lost at what to do with her family and her chair rocks throughout the scene to show her discomfort at being there with Hugh despite ~~her~~^{him} being her father but due to her distrust in him for abandoning their family.



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Examiner Comments

It was the superb attention to detail that made this response stand out and it gained full marks.

The second extract gives a detailed explanation that likens the chair legs to the state of the relationships within the family.



If you are thinking of doing something like set design, you can have prepared diagrams and labelled all the details for each and every scene in your preparation leading up to the exam. Nothing should come as a surprise, this is your set design for your chosen set text.

'Equus' remains one of the most popular texts in this section. Some candidates made reference to John Napier's original design and/or the recent touring production directed by Ned Bennett and designed by Georgia Lowe. There are of course, advantages and disadvantages in seeing a play you are going to write about in an examination and stronger responses still had ownership of ideas and creative intentions rather than regurgitating something recently seen.

On the line "aren't you being a little extreme?", that Hester says, I will use a Multiple Altman Par 64 NSP

on 60-1, rapidly increase to 90-1 intensity over the course of 5 seconds. The specific parcan gives good general white cover, and will be placed stage left and right, sidelighting the bodies of Hester and Dysart. This rapid intensity of white wash will then snap to red wash at 90-1 intensity when Dysart says "I don't". This lighting design visually represents the theme of extremity in the play - as Alan and Dysart are the antitheses of each other. This likes to be original

' As designer, I will use a gobo projected onto the back wall of my composite set, of a horse's head. This

will be a representational horse's head gobo on 100-1. accompanied with a loud 'bang' as it appears for half a second after Dysart's line "with my body I owe worship".

This sudden shock of the gobo appearing, which will be very large on the back cyclorama, will shock the audience but also make them realise the huge omniscient, omnipotent power Equus holds over Alan. This links to the theme of worship in the play and links to elsewhere in the play as when Alan blinds the horses in Scene 32, I will have the same gobo appear when he strikes out their eyes. This links to expressionism from the use of symbolism.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This candidate had an excellent working knowledge of lighting and how it would work on the stage. The attention to detail made it a very sophisticated response.



Design elements usually run through a play with some consistency - be sure to reference how the same element may or may not be used at other points in the play.

Question 5

Many candidates wrote well for this section, and at some length, but were still finding it difficult to get beyond level 3 – 'Competent'. The question makes demands as befits an A level examination, most of which are known before the examination. This in turn led some candidates to write their prepared concept without referencing the unseen extract or the focus of this particular question.

Stronger candidates acknowledged the extract and its place within the wider play. The original performance conditions (OPC) was acknowledged respectfully and concepts were clearly understood, practical and creative. Higher level responses had a real understanding of the director's role and the ideas were valid in terms of practitioner and the extract in the context of the whole production. Outlining a director's concept that honoured the intentions of the playwright was frequently a successful strategy. Most candidates had a secure grasp of the methodologies of their practitioner, but some centres should consider how easily the text choice sits with a particular practitioner. They were some cumbersome combinations which seemed to make it more difficult rather than pairing a practitioner that supported the fundamental aims and intentions of the chosen play. The vast majority of candidates engaged well with 'communication with the audience' and were able to refer to this throughout.

A lot of candidates struggled to connect the OPC to their production concept. The OPC was often just referred to in an opening paragraph, sometimes it was just added as an extra with little relevance to the candidate's vision. Weaker responses strayed into history lessons on OPC, or were often cursory and inaccurate.

Some concepts were not practical and some were dangerous, seriously compromising the well-being of actors and audience.

There was some successful discussion in response to *Woyzeck* where candidates often linked Brecht and Buchner to their creative ideas and this helped to elevate discussion. Some Stanislavski based responses became a list of rehearsal techniques i.e. magic, wandering from the question. *Woyzeck* was a popular combination with Artaud and Brecht and, to an extent with Punchdrunk, but too many candidates had been seduced by Punchdrunk's style without really understanding it. There were a number of excellent responses that used Berkoff as practitioner for the play and these worked well. For *Lysistrata*, Brecht and Berkoff were again popular while a clear winner for *Hedda Gabler* was Stanislavski.

Some of the best responses showed creative flexibility in the way in which a key practitioner's ideas and methodologies can be manipulated for a modern audience. It was also apparent that some candidates had tried some of the ideas out themselves while workshopping the play and this gave a real sense of confident execution.

There were some outstanding responses. Candidates used Artaudian ideas with energy and creativity in looking at the potential of *Woyzeck* in terms of the facial dynamics and reactions of other characters to his body language - simple but very creative. Some excellent responses in a similar vein to *Dr Faustus*. Brecht was applied well to *Woyzeck* to reveal the social inequalities highlighted in the play. Brechtian ideas seem to work less well applied to *Lysistrata* which needn't have been the case. It is important that centres reflect carefully on how the practitioner focus links to the chosen play.

Responses were more successful when they followed the narrative journey of the extract. Some students jumped between key moments without making any links. This did not communicate an understanding of what was actually happening in the text.

There were few responses to *The Maids*, but it did provide some fascinating concepts and ideas for interpretation to a contemporary audience.

Another moment that explores the intense excitable nature at the thought of killing Madame, & also the rhetorical elements that Artaud incorporated as shall be shown on the line 'the tea is ready'. Initially, after saying this line Dolores shall let out a booming scream that will pierce the audience ears. This Artaud used in his productions to 'attack the audience mind'. In the original performance, the maids also got very excited & thrilled on this line as this was the moment that they had been planning for so long. Artaud also incorporated rhetorical elements. This shall be



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Examiner Comments

This extract gives some vibrant detail from the candidate's concept while also citing Artaud and referencing the rest of the play.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Choose a practitioner that supports the play you are interpreting, one that will work easily alongside your own interpretation. (NB: the practitioner must be one on the set list for Section C)

'Woyzek' is a very popular text for Section C and works particularly well alongside Brecht.

In this example, the candidate has chosen Artaud. This works so well because the candidate fully understands Artaud and has carefully considered how Artaudian techniques can be applied to their own concept.

the French revolution. Buchner related closely to these ideas and thus used his political stance to create the basis for the narrative of 'Woyzeck'. ~~Buchner~~ His critical views of society are seen much more explicitly in his 8 page pamphlet 'Hessian Courier' which encourage the proletariat to stand up to the bourgeoisie.

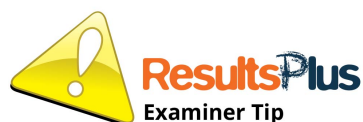
My production of 'Woyzeck' will be influenced by French born playwright Antonin Artaud. This will enable me to utilise his concepts of 'visual poetry' throughout my piece to showcase visual elements to my ~~audience~~ audience.

When in scene 10, whilst Woyzeck sat centre stage at the bottom of the starwheel I would have Marie enter through one of the four walk ways that circle the perimeter of the black-box. She would seat her self next to him on a 10ft by 8ft ~~the~~ rectangular podium that both lowers & raises in the ~~se~~ centre of the round. This ~~design~~ ~~feature~~ a many of Artaud's



This candidate gained full marks - 24//24 for a detailed, knowledgeable confident concept that closely referenced the extract while also connecting moments to the rest of the play.

The second extract chooses a moment from the given extract and quite simply explains how this would be performed, nevertheless this detailed mapping to the extract was omitted entirely by many candidates.



Encourage your candidates to connect their research to themes and ideas in the play. The OPC has to have some bearing on their concept which in itself needs to be workable, safe and legal!

Question 6

This question was less popular than question 5. Again, there was a range of responses and on the whole candidates had a good grasp of stage space. Sometimes the response drifted away from stage space and onto to other elements of the production or sometimes candidates spent too much time on justifying their idea of staging, for example in a church, and didn't give enough examples of how this would impact on the rest of the performance.

Candidates often struggled to show how the OPC had informed their theatrical ideas as a director. A few candidates were so excited by their production concept that they spent the majority of the response discussing the ideas behind this and failed to refer much to stage space and how this would work in performance.

There were some fascinating angles on 'stage space' while conversely, some did not make theatrical sense or were impractical. The term 'stage space' was interpreted as either, the actual stage space and its relationship with the audience or set/props that were physically placed on stage and the proxemics around this. Many weaker responses interpreted stage space very narrowly to mean just set design. Sketches and diagrams of stage plans were particularly helpful and were used more in this question than any other.

Overall, candidates explored the use of stage space through set design and the strongest responses went further to highlight how actors would use this created space.

Many candidates chose an historical setting for their concept, for example *Lysistrata* set in WWI, but it was not always explicit why this would have a relevance to an audience today or how themes might resonate with a contemporary audience.

Exploring the stage space gave the most able candidates real scope for development and the stronger responses really explored the space potential of the chosen performance. There were some outstanding *Woyzeck* responses that worked in very simple terms – just by having The Drum Major standing on a platform over *Woyzeck* 'on his knees in the dirt' and Marie on a different level gives scope for depth and detail and discussion. Some candidates used a revolving stage for example but with little/no developmental discussion. Weaker responses positioned characters from *Lysistrata* in OPC positions with the Chorus on the side without any developmental discussion and justification.

Candidates demonstrated a good level of skill in being able to identify visual elements and describe a range of ideas for creating atmosphere for an audience.

Often the concept was underdeveloped and at times vague. There continues to be inaccurate referencing to contemporary issues when demonstrating an understanding of the playwright's original intention (Brexit as a backdrop for *Lysistrata*, for example), however, more contemporary referencing worked well with *Antigone*; making links between the then and the now in relation to defiance and social law. This may have been influenced by recent revivals at the National Theatre for instance.

Antigone had gained in popularity this year and there were a good number of responses that examiners found sensitive and moving in their portrayal of this Greek tragedy.

Antigone, by Sophocles, was first performed in c. 442 in the amphitheatre of Dionysus. In my production concept, inspired by Punchdrunk, I would set it in Athlone House, North London. The old family mansion house is big enough to facilitate Punchdrunk's "site sympathetic" productions. This means site specific shows with highly detailed naturalistic sets, where the rooms each reflect the characters who inhabit them. I would set my production

lamp. As Punchdrunk audiences are free to roam, curious audience members may view a notebook on his desk inscribed with gold lettering, "official state decree" a line from previously in the play. In

On Haemon's line "reveals his own shallowness of mind", Creon should attempt to leave through a centrally located door ~~in front of it~~ facing the door. He should be unable to open it. In original performance conditions, the central exit was used only by actors playing Gods. Here Creon's inability to assert this dominance shows how he is disillusioned with his own power. Furthermore, it prefigures his own downfall at the end of the play when Antigone, Haemon and Eurydice die, and he is left with political power, but no personal power.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This first extract has a strong, but simple, beginning that sets the tone for the rest of the response. There is a sense even here, that this candidate knows what they want to achieve.

The second extract kills two birds with one stone - the candidate demonstrates a well known technique of their practitioner while connecting it to another part of the play.

The third extract also connects the extract from the question to the OPC and the concept.

This response to 'Woyzeck' gained 22/24 marks placing it firmly in the 'Sophisticated' band. The candidate used Punchdrunk's methodologies, but had a very clear and thoroughly researched concept involving Japanese POW's in WW2.

that time. This clearly links to the play. Whilst Buchner was studying medicine in Strasbourg university the famous chemist Justus von Liebig was conducting experiments on soldiers ~~more~~ involving the effects on diets. This is clearly the inspiration of Woyzeck's pea diet in the play. Where Woyzeck has been put on a pea diet in order to study the psychological and physical effects. There are many horrific experiments that took place in WW2 Japan. The vivisection ~~on~~ of conscious prisoners and the experiments that took place are notorious.

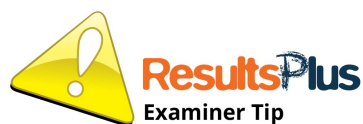
During scene 11 I will have a white wash in the ~~begin~~ beginning to make the space between the characters and audience seems big. ~~On the line Woyzeck says 'They'll be dancing'~~ with only a red dim spot light on Woyzeck. On the line Woyzeck says 'They'll be dancing' I will have the red dim light expand onto Andress and the audience to create tension ~~to~~ and to show again Woyzeck's descent into madness. This is inspired by Punchdrunk methodology of

making their production visceral and intense.



The first extract makes logical sense connecting an incident in the play to their own research for their concept.

The second extract is one of many that makes direct reference to the extract from the question, giving clear instructions how they, as director, would want this extract to be performed.



Research is most useful when it supports ideas within the play and enhances the playwright's intentions. Concepts that stray too far from the play's original meaning make it very difficult to score higher marks.

Paper Summary

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

- Use the statement to structure their response in Section A.
- Include detailed key moments from the live theatre production they have seen.
- Consider using quotes from the Section B extract to support their response as a performer.
- Have a strong technical knowledge of several design elements and their application to the Section B text.
- Use a practitioner that is supportive to the aims of the chosen Section C text.
- Respond directly to the extract while using it to make connections to other moments in the play.

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>

