



A-level **DANCE**

DANC3 – Dance Appreciation: Content and Context
Report on the Examination

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Report on the Examination DANC3 2015

This was the sixth year of entry for the current A2 specification and the sixth examination of the written paper: DANC3. This was the third year of examination for the three areas of study and three set works which were first introduced for examination in June 2013.

General

For Section A and Section B each question required a response in the form of an essay. Two questions were selected by the students, one from each section. Each question was marked out of forty. A banding system, involving five bands covering forty marks, determined the mark awarded for each essay.

As in previous years, the more successful responses showed a focus on the question with detailed knowledge and understanding of the area of study or set work, clear supporting evidence, a coherent structure and clarity in the written expression. Connections were made between content and context, where appropriate, with detailed examples. In a number of responses diagrammatic form was used effectively to support the written analysis. An understanding was shown of the command word in each question. (The glossary of terminology used in written examinations has been included at the end of this report).

The less successful responses did not maintain focus on the question. Although some knowledge was demonstrated, there was a tendency to make general points focusing on identification and description. There were often inaccuracies in the content. Examples were limited and usually lacked sufficient detail to support the point. Written expression was marred by poor spelling and a lack of clarity in the use of English. The structure of the essay did not always have coherence.

This year there was a clear improvement in the effective use of the examination time available. Although some students were still spending more time answering the first question than the second, they seemed to have sufficient time to complete a response to the second question. Some scripts included a list of bullet points because time had run out. However, while this may have allowed some credit to be gained for factual knowledge, the response did not have the appropriate format or detail necessary for an essay requiring analysis and supporting examples. As advised on the front cover of the examination paper, it is recommended that students should allow 45 minutes for each of the two questions in order to provide a sufficient response to access the range of marks for each question.

The previous improvement seen in the quality of essay writing was continued this year. There was a sense of style in the writing and a logical argument with a relevant introduction, progression in the points made, and concluding paragraph. However, there was still a large number of scripts where the handwriting made the essays very difficult to read, which could affect the communication of content.

Section A

As in the previous two years, the questions in Section A focused on the three areas of study which related to dance companies. Students were required to show a relevant response to the question through the demonstration of:

- a knowledge and understanding of the key features of the company and of the different approaches
- a knowledge of contextual factors
- supporting evidence through the use of appropriate examples
- clarity in the line of argument and in the written expression.

The improvement seen last year was continued with fewer essays which included everything that was known generally about the area of study and limited reference to the focus of the question. However, there were still sometimes inaccuracies in the knowledge which reflected on the degree of understanding demonstrated. Although forty marks are available for each question the use of the banding system means that the assessment relates to the quality of response rather than to the number of points or length of essay. Due to the amount of time available to answer the question it is important that the time is used effectively to respond to the requirements of the question and is not wasted on a large amount of unnecessary information. The command word, focus of the question and additional requirements need to be recognised by the students when planning their response. There was still some evidence of pre-prepared responses to the questions of the last two years.

Questions 1, 3 and 5

These were popular questions, particularly question 3. The questions focused on the contribution of practitioners to the development of the company. Reference was needed to a minimum of two practitioners. Identification and details of the key aspects of each contribution were required, which could include reference to a variety of elements e.g. company organisation, administration and promotion; movement style, choreographic style, use of the constituent features. The mark scheme recognised and allowed for a flexibility of approach in the response to the question.

The more successful responses identified a number of key aspects of the contributions of two or three practitioners and provided explanatory detail. Clear supporting evidence was included which related to context and/or practitioners and their works. There was an appreciation of how these aspects of the contributions had allowed the company to change and develop. Some responses showed breadth in their knowledge and understanding; other responses showed less breadth and more depth. Both approaches were successful where the knowledge and understanding shown provided an informed response to the question.

The less successful responses focused on what was known about the works of two practitioners (usually focusing on one practitioner with brief reference to the second). There was often a slight loss of focus on the question with reference to influences on the practitioners and little attempt to link the influences to aspects of the contributions. Response to the question was limited to movement style and subject matter. Supporting evidence lacked the detail needed to clarify the points made.

Questions 2, 4 and 6

The focus of these questions was the key features of works studied. These could refer to a range of elements of the content and creative process e.g. genre, style, subject matter, structure, movement content, use of dancers, use of physical setting, use of aural setting. Examples from the works were needed to support the discussion.

A number of different approaches to these questions were seen and all were appropriate ways of responding. Some students highlighted particular features and then gave examples from works to support the points made. Some students identified features as typical of the company repertoire and provided supporting evidence from a number of works. Another approach involved the identification of works and evidence of features from these works. Whichever approach was taken, the students' understanding of the command word 'discuss' was pertinent to the quality and relevance of the response.

The more successful responses showed detailed knowledge of the key features and provided appropriate evidence or examples from the choreography of the works identified. An understanding was demonstrated of their justification as key features.

The less successful responses simply focused on reference to a practitioner and her/his works. There was identification of some elements but no attempt to clarify their link to key features of the works. The essays were quite general in their response.

Section B

The questions in Section B focused on the three set works and the choreographers. The students were required to show a relevant response to the question through a demonstration of:

- a knowledge and understanding of the features and form of each set work and of the style of the choreographer
- a knowledge of contextual factors (where appropriate)
- the ability to analyse and interpret dances, providing **clear** examples
- clarity in the line of argument and in the written expression.

Question 7

This question focused on the analysis of the development of the character of the Prodigal Son. The analysis needed to include the identification of relevant dances, examples from the choreography relating to aspects of the character's development and an explanation of the connection between the examples and the aspects identified.

The more successful responses maintained a clear focus on the question with reference to relevant moments in the work relating to the stages in the character's development. Clear examples from the choreography were given, with appropriate interpretations.

The less successful responses did not have a secure knowledge of the work, resulting in confusion about the order of events and/or inaccuracy in the comments. General statements were made

about the choreography and interpretations were given which did not always show a clear connection to what had been described. There was a loss of focus on the question which led to a retelling of the whole story rather than reference to key moments in the development of the character.

Question 9

This was a popular question which required the recognition of themes in *Zero Degrees*, an analysis of examples from the choreography to reflect these themes, and an explanation of possible interpretations of these examples linked to the themes. A variety of approaches were seen in response to this question with the focus varying from theme and discussion to supporting evidence. The degree of success in response to the question depended on a clear correlation between theme, relevant example and explanation of the interpretation connecting the example to the theme.

Responses achieving marks in the higher bands showed a very sound knowledge of the themes and the ability to analyse the choreographic content of the work. Some contextual links were made. Detailed examples were provided, with interpretations linked to the themes. The responses referred to sections throughout the work.

Responses achieving marks in the lower bands identified a few themes but showed a limited knowledge of the choreography of *Zero Degrees*. Examples, if given, lacked detail. There were general statements, often showing inaccuracy in the knowledge and unsupported interpretations.

Question 11

This question required the examination, (i.e. analysis and discussion) of the use of the camera and location in *West Side Story*. Clear examples from the **choreographed sections** of the work were needed to show how the aspects of the choreography were enhanced by use of the camera and location.

Responses achieving marks in the higher bands showed a clear response to the question with reference to a range of ways the camera was used and a number of locations from the set work. There was reference to the impact of the use of camera and location on the choreographic presentation. Detailed examples were provided and connections made between the interpretations and the choreography in relation to the question. The responses referred to a number of choreographed sections from the work.

Responses with marks in the lower bands identified a few locations and ways the camera were used but showed a limited knowledge of the choreography of *West Side Story*. Examples, if given, lacked detail. There were general statements about camera angle(s) with no specific detail of what the different angles were. The responses often seemed to be giving a 'scene by scene' account of the film rather than focusing on the question i.e. the use of the camera and location. There was frequently inaccuracy in the knowledge of the movement content of the work and interpretations without supporting examples.

Question 8, 10 and 12

The focus of these questions was the influences on the choreography and movement content of each set work. These influences could relate to a range of aspects e.g. genre, style, technique, subject matter, structure, movement content, dancers, physical setting, aural setting. Details of these influences were needed as well as clear examples from the set works to support the points made.

The more successful responses showed a recognition of the requirement of the question to identify the influences and relate them to the choreography and movement content of the set work. Details of the influences were given and clear connections made. Appropriate examples from the movement content and choreography of the set work were provided, with sufficient explanation to reinforce these connections.

The less successful responses often confused influences with themes. General statements were made, frequently referring to aspects of the choreographers' lives or personal difficulties which were of limited relevance to the question. There was some inaccuracy in the information given. Some responses referred to other works by the choreographers. This information was also of limited relevance to the question unless the student was able to make a clear point identifying the other works as influences. Clear supporting examples were limited.

TERMINOLOGY USED IN WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS

Command Word	Application
Analyse	Identify the elements and examine in detail in order to explain or interpret.
Comment	Express an opinion and/or response.
Compare	Identify and explain the similarities and differences by placing the points alongside each other and changing the focus from one to the other.
Consider	Think carefully about the idea or statement, taking everything into account when reaching a conclusion.
Define	Give the exact meaning in briefest possible terms.
Describe	Give a detailed account of.
Discuss	Refer to the analysis of the idea or elements and describe and evaluate the parts and the whole.
Evaluate	Pinpoint and describe the strengths and weaknesses, concluding with a judgement of which outweighs the other.
Examine	Analyse and discuss.
Explain	Clarify something by providing more detail and the reason(s) for.
Identify	Give the briefest possible information which clearly separates the idea or element from all other ideas or elements.
Illustrate	Make clear by giving explanation and examples.
Justify	Show the grounds on which a decision or conclusion is made; respond to the objections which are likely to be made.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

Converting Marks into UMS marks

Convert raw marks into Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) marks by using the link below.

[UMS conversion calculator](#)