

# DRAMA

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Paper 0411/02  
Coursework

## General comments

Moderators reported that almost all Centres submitted their work promptly and that the contents of packages were well organised. There was a high degree of accuracy in the completion of paperwork this session, with few arithmetical errors and hardly any incomplete submissions. Most Centres chose an appropriate sample of work, which included the highest and lowest-marked candidates, with an even spread across the remainder of the cohort. Worryingly, a small minority of Centres did not select a sample at all, which meant that the moderator was left to make a selection. By far the most common administrative error, however, was omitting to include ICMS forms for all candidates where the entry was larger than six.

Moderators greatly appreciated the large number of ICMS forms that had been completed with meticulous detail, which was very helpful in showing how the marks had been awarded. However, the overall quality and detail of the comments on the ICMS forms was quite variable, and in many cases stock phrases were repeated from the assessment criteria in a way that did not support the tutor's decision to award a particular mark.

Almost all candidates introduced their performances on the DVDs. Many centres included candidates' photographs, often in costume, and drawing attention to individual items of clothing. Even where there were no pictures of candidates, identification was usually straightforward from the descriptions provided on the ICMS forms, although a worrying number of centres missed the requirement to indicate the costume worn by each candidate. This made it difficult in some instances to identify candidates, especially when there was little differentiation of costume.

The quality of DVD recordings has been a perennial issue, and this session brought its fair share of problems with temperamental discs. A small number of discs did not work at all when moderators attempted to play them, which was frustrating for all concerned and created lengthy delays in the moderation process while centres sent replacement DVDs. This notwithstanding, moderators were pleased to report that in the discs that did play easily the overall quality of recordings improved this session. There was evidence of better understanding of how to position the camera, and the sound quality was often improved, perhaps through the use of an external microphone to the camera. Most recordings were free from distraction, the most common exception being peripheral noises. These were often from a nearby playground, or where the performance area was adjacent to a music room that generated background instrumental noise. There were also many issues with lighting where candidates had been filmed in poor lighting or even shadow.

A significant number of candidates did not understand the difference between the filming of a live performance, and dramatic performance intended for film. The focus is on stage performance, but many candidates produced filmic monologues delivered directly to camera with little understanding of stagecraft, often accompanied by a poor appreciation of the context of the extract they were attempting to perform. Other characters on stage were forgotten as they directly addressed the camera, effectively treating the lens as another character. In extreme cases, candidates had lost sight of the fact that these were pieces of drama, written to be performed on stage to a live audience.

## Extracts from plays

For most candidates, the performance of repertoire was their strongest aspect. Moderators reported having seen a good deal of engaging performance work, delivered in appropriate performance settings by candidates with a mature approach to acting. Such candidates were able to employ a range of different dramatic techniques to convey meaning through their performance. It was generally the case that those candidates who performed well in their monologues also tended to be successful in their group extracts, although the dynamics of ensemble performance had the potential to unsettle those who were more natural solo actors. Most of the observations that follow, however, apply equally to monologues as to group performances.

All candidates were aware of the need to demonstrate convincing acting skills. There were relatively few examples of performances that faltered or broke down, but there were many that suffered variously from poor diction, under-projection, mumbling, or unclear articulation. Some candidates were hindered by inappropriate choice of repertoire.

The strongest candidates demonstrated well-refined acting skills, demonstrating proficiency in their performance through mature interpretation, excellent phrasing, precise timing, a strong stage presence and a keen awareness of their audience. When it came to marking, however, tutors frequently confused confidence and hard work with advanced acting skills and this was the most common cause for moderators recommending scaling reductions for Assessment Objective 3. There was a similar situation with Assessment Objective 1, where teachers had rewarded effort, commitment (and possibly attendance) rather than knowledge and understanding of acting, character development and the role of their character in the play as a whole.

Weaker performances often adopted an acting-by-numbers methodology, with words spoken directly to the camera and little appreciation of the craft of acting or the live performer-audience relationship. Pacing, contrast and variation proved problematic for many candidates, some of whom mistook loud histrionics and flailing gestures for emotional depth and passion. In addition to this, the strongest performances were where candidates had fully researched the context of the extract they were performing and were able to demonstrate understanding of what happened immediately before and after it.

So much of the formula for success depended on choosing a suitable extract from a play. Each year, this report provides a table of plays that have been attempted by candidates, which offer an extensive repository of potential repertoire, although it should be emphasized that the plays cited are by no means prescribed. In this session, there were many examples of extracts – both monologue and group – that needed to give greater consideration to choice of text and appropriateness to the candidate's age, gender and life experience. It was clear from some performances – most noticeably in monologues – that candidates had little empathy with the play, its characters, themes or intention. Moderators noted that there were fewer 'internet downloads' offered as repertoire, pieces produced for classroom performance which lacked potential for performance on stage.

The 'desk, chair, phone' scenes that were once the staple diet of mid-range GCSE performances were a little less in evidence this session. There was evidence of candidates considering how their work should be staged as well as considering more carefully what to wear for their performance. There were far fewer instances of distracting stage-wear, although this is not to say that all candidates performed in elaborate costume. Most, however, showed sensitivity and maturity as to what might be appropriate and fitting to the style-genre of the play they were performing.

A handful of Centres decided to use the same text for both individual and group work. This was desperately limiting as it reduced the variety, scope and challenge of selecting a different play and failed to display the range of the candidates' performance skills. Equally, a few Centres used the school production to assess the group piece, which was not at all appropriate for assessment.

Group pieces demonstrated similar strengths and weaknesses to monologues. In the strongest of them, there was a good choice of repertoire, outstanding acting, sensitive interaction between actors, and staging that developed a level of pacing and energy that put 'classroom' performances to shame. Such pieces were often from Centres that directed their candidates towards appropriate texts that provided challenge but offered achievable performance goals. These groups invariably performed to a live audience, which added to the sense of occasion and helped develop acting skills in a much more theatrical manner than when performing in a classroom setting.

Weaker group pieces were generally the reverse of all of this, but most often suffered from lack of understanding of the style of the play and what would be necessary to deliver a performance that was true to its conventions. There was often scope for more to be done with respect to stage positioning and the handling of props. On occasion, candidates could not be clearly heard and some props became more of a (slightly comic) distraction than an enhancement to the performance. Finally, it was clear that some groups were limited by their performance space. Whilst this did not affect the marks awarded or influence the moderation process, candidates who performed in corridors or classrooms often struggled to create the same sense of performance as those who took to the stage.

### Devised Pieces

The overall view from the moderating panel was that there was little evidence of improvement this session in the quality of devised pieces, or in their delivery, and that devised pieces tended to be less effective than extracts from plays. Most candidates were marked in line with the assessment criteria, recognising the difficulty of creating, shaping and refining original material. However, it was also noted that Centres' assessment of devised work was far more generous than the marks awarded to repertoire performance, both in terms of Assessment Objective 2 and Assessment Objective 3. With Assessment Objective 2, there was a strong tendency for teachers to award credit for attendance and commitment in isolation to the quality of dramatic involvement seen in the final performance. Such teachers rewarded effort rather than outcome, and there was little reference to refinement of ideas and function of characters within the pieces.

Where marking was over-generous for Assessment Objective 3, it was often around issue-based devised work that failed to avoid predictable, clichéd and over simplistic approaches. There were quite a few examples where students played a role that was too mature for them. Moderators reported with some regret that much of the work was naturalistic, predictable and clichéd, a type of extended soap opera that was often extremely dull and uneventful. Notwithstanding the prevalence of low- and mid-band work, the strongest performances were often focused on a specific performance style and fully exploited the potential of that genre. This quality of focus meant that stronger candidates were able to choose from a rich menu of techniques in order to create effective theatre. Many Centres encouraged candidates to explore social issues and there were examples of some excellent non-narrative physical work, often including mime and dance that stimulated and challenged the candidates.

### Frequently-used plays for repertoire performances

Edward Albee	<i>Three Tall Women</i> <i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?</i> <i>Zoo Story</i>
Alan Ayckbourn	<i>Absent Friends</i> <i>Between Mouthfulls</i> <i>Confusions</i> <i>Invisible Friends</i> <i>The Norman Conquests</i>
Claire Bayley	<i>The Container</i>
Samuel Beckett	<i>Waiting For Godot</i>
Steven Berkoff	<i>Metamorphosis</i> <i>The Trial</i>
Bertolt Brecht	<i>Fear and Misery of the Third Reich</i> <i>Happy End</i> <i>Mother Courage</i>
Richard Cameron	<i>Can't Stand Up For Falling Down</i>
David Campton	<i>The Cagebirds</i>
Anton Chekhov	<i>The Seagull</i>
Caryl Churchill	<i>Top Girls</i>

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Tim Crouch	<i>I, Shakespeare</i>
Shelagh Delaney	<i>A Taste of Honey</i>
Denise Deegan	<i>Daisy Pulls It Off</i>
Margaret Edson	<i>Wit</i>
Euripides	<i>Medea</i> <i>The Trojan Women</i>
Dario Fo	<i>Accidental Death of an Anarchist</i>
Bill Forsyth	<i>Gregory's Girl</i>
Athol Fugard	<i>No Good Friday</i>
John Galsworthy	<i>The Fugitive</i>
John Godber	<i>Bouncers</i> <i>Shakers</i> <i>Teechers</i>
Nicolai Gogal	<i>The Government Inspector</i>
Lorraine Hansberry	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>
John Hodge	<i>The Collaborators</i>
Henrick Ibsen	<i>A Doll's House</i>
Eugene Ionesco	<i>The Bald Soprano</i>
Charlotte Keatley	<i>My Mother Said I Never Should</i>
Dennis Kelly	<i>DNA</i> <i>Orphans</i>
Mike Leigh	<i>Abigail's Party</i>
Nell Leyshon	<i>Glass Eels</i>
Mary O'Malley	<i>Once a Catholic</i>
David Mamet	<i>Oleanna</i>
Arthur Miller	<i>All My Sons</i> <i>Death of a Salesman</i> <i>The Crucible</i>
Anthony Minghella	<i>Cigarettes and Chocolate</i>
Eugene O'Neill	<i>Ah Wilderness!</i>
Joe Orton	<i>The Ruffian On the Stair</i>
John Osborne	<i>Look Back in Anger</i>
Harold Pinter	<i>The Birthday Party</i> <i>The Caretaker</i> <i>The Homecoming</i>
Dennis Potter	<i>Blue Remembered Hills</i>

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J B Priestley	<i>An Inspector Calls</i>
Mark Ravenhill	<i>Pool (no water)</i>
Yasmina Reza	<i>Art</i>
Willy Russell	<i>Blood Brothers</i> <i>Educating Rita</i> <i>Shirley Valentine</i>
Peter Shaffer	<i>Amadeus</i> <i>Equus</i>
William Shakespeare	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> <i>Hamlet</i> <i>Julius Caesar</i> <i>King Lear</i> <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> <i>Othello</i> <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> <i>Twelfth Night</i>
R C Sherriff	<i>Journey's End</i>
Neil Simon	<i>Barefoot in the Park</i> <i>The Odd Couple</i> <i>Plaza Suite</i> <i>Rumours</i>
Sophocles	<i>Antigone</i>
Simon Stephens	<i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night</i>
Shelagh Stephenson	<i>Five Kinds of Silence</i>
John Webster	<i>The Duchess of Malfi</i>
Oscar Wilde	<i>A Woman of No Importance</i> <i>Lady Windermere's Fan</i> <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>
Tennessee Williams	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> <i>The Glass Menagerie</i>
Mark Wheeler	<i>Too Much Punch for Judy</i>

# DRAMA

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<p>Paper 0411/11 Written Examination</p>
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## Key messages

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

## General comments

The revised syllabus in which candidates need only focus on one of the stimuli has obviously had a positive effect and many candidates showed improved understanding of the process whereby drama is created. Candidates showed a good appreciation of the set extract from *OPPENHEIMER* and many communicated a good grasp of the underlying issues featured in the play. There is evidence of a growing awareness of how the elements of drama can be applied effectively to enhance performance and the understanding and use of appropriate technical language is encouraging.

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

With so many marks available in **Sections B** and **C**, it is important that candidates choose a question which allows them to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Each year a number of candidates appear to choose the 'wrong' question – earlier responses in the paper suggest that they would have been better served by choosing a question which focused on a different area. This year **Question 14** proved challenging for candidates in this respect.

The approach to devised material seems to have improved now that the focus is on a single piece of work. Most candidates had engaged practically with the stimuli in the pre-release material and the results proved effective, presumably because candidates had more time to devote to a single project.

Evaluative comment, generally required in responses relating to the devised piece, were rather simplistic and superficial in some cases. Candidates need to consider carefully the reactions of their audience and possibly feedback that was given either during the rehearsal or performance process. Where performances had the intended impact on their audience, candidates should be able to communicate clearly the difference between what was expected and the actual outcome.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Section A**

#### **Questions 1–6 OPPENHEIMER**

##### **Question 1**

This question appears to have caught a significant number of candidates out. The majority identified a dress or skirt as being an appropriate costume for CHARLOTTE SERBER but when it came to providing a reason for the choice, a very high proportion did not recognise the absolute necessity, (dictated by the text) for her to pick up the hem of her skirt in order to collect donation money. Many responses suggested reasons related to fashion and historical period, whilst others focused on the symbolic, recommending a red dress to represent the Communist sympathies underpinning the fundraiser. Because the *function* of the costume was central to the choice, responses which did not identify the use of the skirt could not score both marks. Surprisingly a significant number of responses identified CHARLOTTE SERBER as a man wearing trousers or a suit. Clearly these candidates had not understood the text in sufficient depth.

##### **Question 2**

Virtually all candidates scored both marks for this question identifying facial expression, posture, pitch, tone and volume as elements that would communicate JOE WEINBERG's *faux pas* in mistaking JEAN TATLOCK as OPPIE's wife. Many responses identified several possible pieces of advice with as many justifications that refer to his enthusiasm to please, and his awkwardness/embarrassment in getting it wrong.

##### **Question 3**

Examiners were looking for answers that demonstrated how appropriate physicality can communicate meaning on stage. The majority of candidates answered this question effectively but in a significant number of cases candidates provided vague responses such as 'use physical gestures' or 'upright stance' which could not be credited. Some candidates repeated the same gesture, e.g. 'point' more than once but in different contexts, in which case only the first use of the gesture was credited by the Examiners.

A few candidates offered a long and detailed response with a variety of suggestions for physicality including facial expression with a range of detailed comments to support their answers. The question was worth three marks and therefore one valid suggestion for each of three marks was all that was required.

##### **Question 4**

This question was almost universally answered well with candidates scoring the full four marks. Virtually every candidate could identify the key opportunities for the use of props. However, there was a very great variance in the interpretation of the meaning of a 'moment'. Some responses picked out a single line, whereas others, following the context in which the prop was used, considered the moment to be several lines long. There were even one or two which proposed the whole scene as the 'moment' since the prop's use was on-going. As this was clearly a matter open to interpretation any viable suggestion was accepted by the Examiners.

### Question 5

Many candidates were able to suggest two things that motivate GENERAL LESLIE GROVES. Responses included reference to GROVES' rank, academic accomplishments, patriotism, dislike of communism, and other valid reasons. These suggestions were usually ably supported with reasoning taken from the text. The responses were also mostly economically constructed with short, pertinent observations.

### Question 6

Only a minority of candidates provided enough detail to meet the 4 or 5 mark bands in this question. Candidates produced widely varying approaches but a significant number chose to focus on the lighting, furniture and props rather than character engagement. Often there were only a couple of valid 'directorial' observations although most responses identified one thing that they thought EDWARD TELLER should emphasise.

### Questions 7–8 Devised work

#### Question 7

The focus of this question was which role in the devised piece was most effectively portrayed, and how it was achieved, creating opportunities for candidates to discuss the creation of drama and how the group developed the role using dramatic techniques. Many candidates concerned themselves with pure narrative and consequently were not able to score highly. When discussing character development a number of responses referred to rehearsal techniques in some depth whilst neglecting application in performance. Character development exercises such as 'hot seating' from the devising process are not appropriate here. A number of responses featured lighting, costume and make-up which is acceptable, but where this is the sole aspect of discussion candidates cannot score highly. A few candidates did not seem to understand the meaning of 'role' in this context and appeared to conceive it as signifying message, purpose or intention.

#### Question 8

Nearly all candidates were able to access at least one mark in this question simply by writing one sentence that summed up the mood of their devised piece. Interestingly there was a very significant variety of sentences ranging from two word statements to paragraph-long surmises containing a general comment on content or on how effective the piece was. Most viable sentences were credited by the Examiner. References to costume, lights and sound were given credit where appropriate. A number of responses were predominantly narrative or descriptive and these could not score higher than two marks. Generally this question provoked a good level of response with many candidates able to offer suggestions as to how the intended (or unintended) mood worked out in performance.

### Section B

### Questions 9–11 OPPENHEIMER

#### Question 9

This question prompted by the far the greatest number of responses. There were many examples of candidates responding with keen insight and imagination which demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the character of OPPIE. There were several sophisticated responses which evidenced a mature and thorough appreciation of characterisation and the potential for the actor playing the role to maximise its impact. There were a few less effective answers which tended to focus on the more obvious features of the character and often such responses tended to include more detail of costume and make-up, which, while not irrelevant, should be seen as an adjunct to the personality being represented through the overall character design and representation. It should be remembered that the context of this question was preparing for an audition and so consequently aspects of costume and make-up should be very much a secondary consideration. A significant number of responses comprised extended character analysis without any reference to the text or how the character might be played or interpreted. Such literary responses lacked application and therefore could not be considered for marks in the upper band.



### Question 10

This was a question primarily about recognising the dramatic potential of the given scenes in the 'lecture series' and as such highlights the role of the director thereby allowing candidates who have an interest in this area to demonstrate their knowledge and expertise.

A relatively small number of candidates chose to answer but overall responses were well conceived. Candidates recognised that badly done, these scenes could be boring for the audience but at the same time recognised the danger of going too far in the other direction. Candidates were able to highlight stylistic elements within the scenes, and selected two scenes which had the potential for creating contrast in terms of atmosphere and audience engagement. This was sometimes achieved with technical and design elements but also by the positioning of the central performer and the ways in which that performer could establish a relationship with the audience. There were a number of original approaches, some of which were comfortably viable.

### Question 11

This question centred on design challenges for the extract from *OPPENHEIMER* and did not specify a particular discipline. Instead, it encouraged candidates to discuss a variety of issues across several design disciplines. A significant minority of candidates tended to focus heavily on one discipline almost to the exclusion of the others which meant that though the topic was well covered the candidate could not score highly. Candidates for the most part however were able to discuss issues relating to at least three disciplines, (mostly costume, lighting and stage design) and in most cases these challenges would revolve around the high turnover of scenes within the extract and the challenges presented by the rapid scene changes.

### Section C

#### Questions 12–14 Devised work

### Question 12

This was quite a popular question. A large number of candidates covered the topic effectively and most were able to present a considerable range of techniques they had used to communicate interaction between the characters in their devised piece.

It was pleasing to see that many candidates were aware of practitioners and styles and that they were able to incorporate these as influences in their discussion of the dramatic process. Artaudian and Brechtian method featured strongly in a number of responses as did an awareness of devices such as tableau, flashback and monologue.

There is still a significant percentage of candidates discussing process using classroom drama techniques in lieu of the 'theatrical' dramatic methodology. Examiners are seeing frequent references to such classroom techniques as 'Thought Tracking', 'Hot Seating', etc. almost always in the context of a discussion of the performance process. These seem to be used interchangeably with 'genuine' dramatic devices. These classroom drama techniques are used exclusively in the development of ideas in the devising and rehearsal process to explore and investigate performance possibilities. They are not used in performance unless for a clearly and expressly specified dramatic purpose.

Additionally there was some inappropriate focus on the effectiveness of the rehearsal process and of line learning. This has no place in an evaluative discussion about the effectiveness of performance method, skills and techniques.

### Question 13

This was also a popular question. It required candidates not only to describe their overall dramatic intention for their devised piece but also to say how effective their decisions had been. Candidates could explore a wide range of theatrical devices and methods and how they could be used to good effect.

Some candidates fell into the trap of simply providing a narrative or plot résumé of the devised piece without addressing the specific methods they employed to communicate their intention to the audience. There were few responses which offered a comprehensive discussion of intention in harmony with ways and means to achieve it. Elements of descriptive narrative were evident in almost every response and even the most able candidates felt the need somehow to relate aspects of the story before they felt suitably confident about offering evaluative comment. The best answers would maintain a strong focus on dramatic intention with a sustained evaluation of the methods used and outcomes achieved.

#### **Question 14**

This question had costume design as its focus, inherent in which was the recognition that many devised pieces would not necessarily have a significant budget for the production of costumes. Regardless of whether candidates had access to costume for their actual performance, this provides them with an opportunity to recreate imaginatively how the piece could work if a wide selection of costumes were available.

Most responses discussed the costumes used in their production and many acknowledged that these were often basic and the best that could be realised under a constrained budget. Despite such practical limitations, this first level of response was in most cases adequate to good.

Somewhat disappointingly however, the second half of the response did not produce any significant evidence of the originality and innovative thought that Examiners were seeking. Given the option of an unlimited budget candidates were encouraged to break away from the limiting costume design features of their devised piece or at the very least suggest viable alternatives to costuming the show. In the vast majority of cases however the responses were typified by suggestions that implied 'more of the same only better'. This in some cases meant 'designer T-shirts' instead of market bought ones and even extended to a recommendation that 'real gold' might be used to adorn a royal personage.

# DRAMA

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**Paper 0411/12**  
**Written Examination**

## Key messages

- Many candidates continue to write too much for questions that are worth 2, 3 or 4 marks and in some cases more than for questions that are worth 25 marks. By spending too much time on the early questions in section A, candidates often run out of time on the essay questions in section B and C. Bullet points for questions that are worth 2, 3 and 4 marks are acceptable.
- There has been a significant improvement in the quality of devised work in recent years. However, it is worrying that a number of candidates this year referred to reader(s) rather than audience which implied that they had not done the practical work specified in the syllabus.
- Candidates need to indicate which of the stimuli they had used.
- Some candidates included references to aspects of their devised piece without sufficient explanation. It is important for candidates to remember that Examiners have not seen the devised work and therefore sufficient detail should be provided to explain the point being made.
- Candidates need to respond directly to what is asked in the question. Some quite sophisticated answers did not focus on the question and therefore could not access the mark scheme.
- Questions that required candidates to evaluate their work were often done superficially. Responses tended to lack reflection on how the actual performance had achieved what was intended. Often, candidates relied on vague and simplistic assertions.
- Some quite able candidates wrote essays that showed impressive understanding without any sense of practical application, evaluation or direct reference to the extract or devised piece. Similarly, some candidates loaded their responses with ideas for direction, performance or design without showing understanding of the piece or justifying their ideas.
- The design question in section B was looking for specific challenges that might be faced in staging such a production. Too frequently candidates described the set rather than communicating solutions as to how it might be achieved and were, therefore, unable to access the full range of marks.
- The design question in section C allowed candidates a choice of sound or lighting. Some candidates who attempted this question were insufficiently prepared and did not have the required technical knowledge or experience.
- Centres are evidently engaging with the glossary provided and it is pleasing to note the increased use of key technical terms in candidate responses.

## General comments

Many candidates wrote their answers in more detail than was required by the allocation of marks. There was also a tendency to supply more than the number of points specified in the question, for example in **Question 3**. There was, again, a trend seen this year in the number of responses that did not focus on the question that was asked. Candidates sometimes provided quite sophisticated responses that were mostly irrelevant and therefore could not be credited.

The pre-release material offered much potential for design and action. However, some candidates had attempted to modernise it or add inappropriate features such as a Greek Chorus. This is a text that very much depends on the historical accuracy of the events surrounding the D-Day landings.

Many candidates demonstrated how the elements of drama can be applied effectively to enhance performance. This attracts higher marks than answers which tend to respond in general terms rather than making specific points about the performance of the text. There is also growing evidence of the understanding and use of both appropriate technical language and practitioner influences and techniques. However, these can only attract high marks if there is also relevant, appropriate reference to the text and specific application.

Most candidates had clearly worked as part of a group to prepare and perform a single piece of devised work. A number continue to write very detailed and extensive narrative introductions to responses on their devised work that are not relevant to the question; this is not a requirement and wastes valuable time. However, candidates do need to be sufficiently explicit so as to make their intentions clear to an Examiner who has not seen the performance.

The approach to devising was varied. Many of the devised pieces seemed to be both imaginative and creative, with evidence of experimentation with different styles, including children's theatre, docudrama and physical theatre, clear dramatic intentions and a strong sense of audience. Such approaches provided the candidates with much more understanding and experience that they could incorporate into their answers and thus improved their chances of accessing the higher levels within the mark scheme. Conversely, mundane and unimaginative approaches to devising tended to lead to weak responses; pieces that simply aimed to entertain, with success evaluated in terms of assertions about how much the audience laughed, generally provided candidates with too limited an experience to allow them to reach to the higher levels in the mark schemes.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Section A**

##### **Question 1**

This was generally well answered, although frequently in too much detail. It was surprising that a significant number of candidates had not read or did not use the information in lines 21–23 of the extract. If a candidate chooses to run counter to the playwright's intentions, that decision should be acknowledged and explained. It should be possible to gain both marks by writing just a couple of sentences.

##### **Question 2**

'Delivery of lines' should elicit a response that refers to vocal elements. Most candidates provided a reasonable piece of advice but a number did not understand what the lines suggested about Stagg's rather 'blunt' manner and, therefore, the suggestions did not suit the context of the lines given.

##### **Question 3**

This question was often well done, although some did not understand the term 'physical'. References to vocal elements were not credited. Some responses were very vague and a few were repetitious.

##### **Question 4**

The question asked for a moment. A prop without an indication of when in the extract it was used was deemed insufficient. There were numerous props specified for use in the text and so it was unnecessary for candidates to suggest other props. However, such suggestions were credited where a moment was specified and the use of the prop was reasonable. Some candidates were not clear what a prop is, citing items of costume or scenery or set instead.

##### **Question 5**

Some of the responses here were rambling and repetitious but many candidates understood the character of the electrician and his function in the piece. They found it easier to make valid suggestions about the acting than to provide a justification. Again, there were a number of vague ideas of acting that were not related to the lines specified.

### **Question 6**

Many candidates had a very good grasp of the significance of this passage, but a number gave only advice for performance or suggestions about what should be brought out. A significant number focused on just one character, usually Stagg, and most only looked at part of the specified section. It was important for the candidate to be able to show an understanding of the context of the extract in order to provide appropriate suggestions.

### **Question 7**

The question asked for an aspect of the chosen stimulus, and was looking for dramatic potential, and it was a pity that many candidates saw this only in terms of story or plot. Others offered ideas about techniques without specific reference to what they actually did to create drama in their piece. Many managed a competent explanation of their dramatic intention and offered some specific detail about how they worked towards its realisation and a few provided several practical examples to illuminate their response. The succinct but proficient discussions required to access the highest level of the mark scheme were rare.

### **Question 8**

A few candidates were unable to select two characters from their piece and some did not really understand the term 'interact'. Some candidates looked at two characters individually and did not relate the two. Very few responses elicited the detail that was required to access the full range of marks.

## **Section B**

### **Question 9**

This appeared to be the most popular question. It was often extremely well answered, with some contextually appropriate understanding of character, linked closely to the extract and including detailed ideas about how to play the role. Marks were awarded according to the assessment criteria in the mark scheme, which required an understanding of character coupled with practical ideas for the realisation of the role, supported by appropriate references to the extract.

### **Question 10**

This was also popular and, frequently, well-answered, with some insightful examples. Many candidates were able to communicate a mature understanding of the various relationships in the piece citing specific moments in the extract to support their answers. The most sophisticated responses were able to show a detailed practical understanding in their answer communicating a real sense of drama.

### **Question 11**

This was neither popular nor well-answered. Most who attempted it had some appreciation of a range of aspects of design and most identified some appropriate challenges. Some provided little detail about a lengthy list of design elements, while others chose to go a little deeper with one or two aspects, but most who tackled this question did not show any great depth of practical understanding and/or application. Many struggled to incorporate specific references to the text or to offer thoughtful and appropriate practical solutions.

## **Section C**

### **Question 12**

Some candidates had a reasonable grasp of dramatic structure and used appropriate terminology with confidence. Most managed to identify an intended message and the better responses showed how they structured their piece to enable them to communicate their message, evaluating the extent of their success in a convincing and well-supported fashion. Unfortunately, there are still a few candidates who see structure solely in terms of story and many who write only in general terms, without making specific references to any relevant aspects of their piece.

### Question 13

A number of candidates misread the question and wrote about both sound and lighting but only one aspect could be credited. Understanding of the potential of lighting design was marginally superior to sound. Sound was mostly confined to the provision of a kind of musical sound-track for the piece, even when a description of the action in the piece mentions a range of opportunities for sound effects, such as police sirens and telephones. There was some basic technical understanding, but the opportunity to display knowledge and understanding beyond what might be achieved using the Centre's technical facilities was largely ignored. Many candidates' idea of what may be achieved using design elements began and ended with the use of colour to denote character or evoke atmosphere. Most struggled to link their ideas to specific points in their devised pieces.

### Question 14

This provoked a very wide range of responses. As always, there were those who cited aspects of the story and/or character as the main means of engagement, while others talked chiefly about technical elements. The best responses covered a range of approaches, clearly explained with detailed references to what actually happened during the performance and integrated with a practical evaluation of their success. It is apparent that where candidates have been afforded the opportunity to perform their piece, as required in the syllabus, the better the quality of response to questions about it.

# DRAMA

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Paper 0411/13  
Written Examination

## Key messages

- Candidates should read the questions carefully and ensure that they provide all that is required of a particular question. Where ever possible they should reference the text and be specific. Many candidates wrote about the text and their devised work in very general terms.
- Where questions ask the candidate to provide advice on how a dramatic role should be performed, it should be made clear how the character should be heard and seen on stage in order to convey the character's personality, attitudes and relationships.
- In **Section A**, many candidates spent disproportionate amounts of time on questions that were worth only a few marks. **Question 1** and **2**, both worth 2 marks, saw several essay style responses and this had a detrimental effect as candidates were unable to spend as much time as necessary on the final questions.
- Candidates need to consider carefully their choice of question in **Sections B** and **C**. For example, Centres which have not taught technical or design skills, such as set design in this year's paper, should advise their candidates to steer clear of questions which require extensive understanding of these areas.
- In **Sections B** and **C** candidates should support their knowledge and understanding of dramatic concepts with practical examples of how these ideas can be applied in performance or detailed evaluation of the success and effectiveness of the drama. Invariably, questions in **Sections B** and **C** will require candidates to offer such analytical comment – **how** something can be achieved and **why** it was effective.
- Candidates who have engaged practically with their devised pieces to performance standard tend to show greater confidence with the questions in **Section C**.
- Candidates need to be clear on the difference between process/exploration and rehearsal through to performance. It is clearly sound policy for Centres to advise pupils to make notes on the entire process.
- Candidates should be familiar with the key terminology, and subject language. An extensive (but not exhaustive) glossary is provided in the syllabus to assist in the identification of key terms.

## General comments

There were very few examples of rubric infringement and/or incomplete papers with the vast majority of candidates able to access the demands of the paper and complete within the given time.

Centres, by and large, and year by year, are demonstrating a greater understanding of the syllabus requirements, and candidates are showing greater knowledge of the technical aspects of performance with appropriate use of performing arts vocabulary. Fewer candidates are hampered by a lack of subject-specific knowledge. The appropriate and knowledgeable use of performing arts vocabulary is essential if candidates are to score highly, although it is not enough to reference these without giving precise explanation. For example, candidates may refer to 'body language', 'tone of voice', etc. as a means of showing how a character/role might be (or was) played but with no further description of what the actor might do in order to achieve the desired effect. Candidates should refer to particular points of action in the text or devised piece rather than making generalised comment (*see key messages above*).

The responses to the questions about the play extract displayed a wide range of ability although there were fewer candidates achieving marks in the lower mark bands than in previous years. It was clear in many instances that the recommendation that the text be performed, at least informally, had been heeded. As all the questions on the play extract were concerned with eliciting responses that demonstrated an understanding of how to transfer 'from page to stage', candidates who had practical experience of *Little Eagles* were likely to be at a distinct advantage.

With the questions relating to devised work, while many candidates demonstrated the ability to link theory to practice, there was still a tendency to offer too much narrative content. There was a sense that, in some cases, practical work was insufficiently realised or inadequately developed. A few candidates appeared not to have completed all of the practical aspects of the syllabus – there were many who did not refer to the actual text/script/moments in the devised piece, suggesting that the devised work had been seen as a theoretical exercise. In some cases, there was evidence that candidates lacked an understanding of key dramatic ideas. As always, in the written paper, candidates who planned their time and strategy carefully produced confident responses with the strongest coming from those candidates who had explored ideas fully in performance. These were able to reflect critically on their own actual experience of creating drama – they were, in fact, able to write about the application of creative ideas and be able to evaluate their effectiveness in performance.

There are still some areas where confusions lie with the most telling being in relation to properties (props) and the set, its settings and furnishings. A chair, for example, is not a prop, it is part of the set, unless a character picks it up and uses it for a particular purpose – to jam a door shut, for example. Too many candidates this year referred to the 'rocket' as a prop without suggesting how this part of the set might be used.

A few candidates attempted to answer all the questions in **Sections B** and **C** and in such cases marks were awarded to the answers which addressed the greatest number of assessment criteria. Naturally, because of the time required to produce a strong answer for a 25-mark question, such candidates were unlikely to score above single figures for each section. Centres are encouraged to advise candidates in this respect before they sit the examination.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Section A 1 – 6**

##### **Question 1**

Most candidates were able to give advice as to a costume that the character might wear and state why. Some candidates referred to the wearing of a costume that reflected status without saying what the costume was.

##### **Question 2**

This was generally well answered with most candidates offering a variety of advice with appropriate back-up. However, there were many who wrote too much, wanting to make clear their understanding of the subtext and the revelation of the betrayal. There were some who did not understand that the question was referring to vocal awareness and delivery of lines through pitch, pause, pace, tone, etc. and instead only offered a physical way of delivering the line.

##### **Question 3**

This was well answered with most candidates offering three valid 'physical' gestures/movements/facial expressions to show physical emphasis, with only a small number giving vocal direction instead. The best responses tied the actions directly to the words spoken and gave line references.

##### **Question 4**

Candidates responses were varied in this section; either identifying a prop, but not the moment, or not stating its effect. Some candidates gave the set as props, such as a podium or block, or costume pieces as props. On the whole the majority of candidates were able to obtain strong marks in this question.



### Question 5

Most candidates understood the demands of the question, with very few obtaining less than 2 marks. Many picked out the clear 'inner' and 'outer' threats and used lines to support their answer but a proportion struggled with the concept of 'motivation' such as STALIN being motivated by the lines he said. Some candidates gave directions how STALIN could show he was motivated, but did not always refer to what the motivation was or how/why it motivated him. It was clear that some did not fully understand what was meant by the term 'motivate' in a dramatic context, and unless knowledge of the concept was implicit somewhere in the answer, little credit could be given.

### Question 6

Candidates answered this question with a focus predominantly on the DOCTOR. There was rarely any reference to the overall scene, and if there was, again it was inferred through the playing of the DOCTOR. Candidates who did mention the overall scene gave a range of aesthetic directions in order to show the mood, tone or atmosphere, i.e. blue for cold, or snow. However, most candidates achieved sound marks in this question with many backing up answers with detail of stage movement and thought process, and explaining the DOCTOR's 'journey' from the earlier scene with what needed to be emphasised in performance to communicate this change in her perspective.

## 7 – 8 Devised Work

### Question 7

Quite often, a successful answer depended on how the devised piece had been set up. There were some quite intricate descriptions and justifications for the use of space and detail about how this was used for contrasting scenes. Most candidates were able to identify the type of space used and give a general description. Some candidates only spoke of lighting, but in most cases their comments referred to split staging or isolation of staging. Some just wrote about a small black box/class room with little or no set, with little or no suggestion for possible blocking of the scene(s).

### Question 8

Candidates offered a range of responses to this question. Some were rehearsal techniques, and others were acting techniques used in the performance. Some candidates who talked about the lighting being a technique went on to justify it further, and others who had spoken of plot and structure initially, also identified forms within their explanation. Whereas many were quite able to quote and explain a range of techniques, other resorted to 'voice' and 'movement' with little development or explanation of how they were used.

## Section B 9 – 11 Little Eagles

### Question 9

This was by far the most popular question in Section B. There were a wide range of answers showing a good deal of understanding of the character of KOROLYOV. Most candidates were able to identify a level of practical application, with some giving more of a character study, where the application of how it might be acted was more inferred through their analysis of the role. Candidates were split between those that said what KOROLYOV was like (often in great detail and understanding of the character) and those that went on to say how the character could be realised. Most quoted from the text; many gave specific examples of what the auditionee would actually do, but only some managed to do both and develop the idea of an actor preparing the role for an audition. Some candidates misread the question as they spoke of costume and the final performance of the role rather than the auditioning of the character of KOROLYOV.

### Question 10

Candidates were generally comfortable with this question, although it was not a popular choice. There was a stronger sense of historical understanding with those at the higher end showing a greater imaginative approach to how this might be achieved on stage through characterisation and using a range of technical and design elements. At the lower end candidates struggled to identify what was required, or give detailed application of their approach to the play.

### Question 11

The few that took on this question did seem to have a reasonable idea of how a design team would have to consider problems and most offered solutions. Candidates were able to identify some of the issues and complications that the text demanded. Most answers showed a creative approach to the play, utilising sound, costume, set and lights. Some candidates exhausted their understanding over problems faced after only explaining a few. There was evidence of strong levels of application within this section as the question allowed for depth and detail within the answers.

### **Section C 12 – 14 Devised work**

#### **Question 12**

This was not a popular choice with candidates. Some wrote about greater resources overall, and not just set design as demanded by the question, getting side-tracked by costume for example. The candidates at the top end were assured of the impact on the audience as a result of their set design choices and offered a strong range of application with clear understanding of relevant technical vocabulary.

#### **Question 13**

There were not many responses to this question. Some candidates missed the distinction to be made between the processes of devising and rehearsing the final product. Those who offered clear rehearsal explanations sometimes evaluated the impact, but not always and there were many candidates who explained their final performance and impact and gave token gestures to what they felt was rehearsal, but was in fact the devising process.

#### **Question 14**

This was the most popular question within **Section C** and one which was answered effectively for the most part. However, some candidates tended to focus on one character more than the other, or go into a description of what was happening in the scene. Surprisingly few made a distinction between the character and the actor playing that character. There were instances where candidates could not identify a dramatic acting skill, but instead said things such as 'acted angry'. Candidates needed to refer to the actual text/script/moments in the devised piece when exploring their chosen skills. At the higher end, evaluation was clear in this section with rationales for intended effects, their outcome and impact on the audience.