



AS

DANCE

Component 1 - Performance and Choreography
Report on the Examination

7236/X
June 2018

Version: 1.0

Further copies of this Report are available from aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2018 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

General administration

The externally set task list for Component 1 is published on AQA secure key materials (<https://extranet.aqa.org.uk>) on **15 September** in the academic year of assessment. It is therefore the responsibility of the school/college to ensure that students receive the correct externally set task list for the year in which they are certificating.

Visits for examining this component

Examiners arrange visits directly with their allocated schools/colleges. It is essential that the Dance teacher liaises with school/college colleagues and their Examinations Officer to identify several convenient dates when space will be available, before agreeing an assessment date with the AQA examiner. Examiners arrange their schedules at the beginning of the spring term after examiner standardisation has taken place, meeting schools/colleges' preferences as far as possible. The examiner will not necessarily have any details regarding the number of students. It is extremely helpful when teachers are prompt in their response to the examiner and provide an email address, as this can be a quick and effective means of communication. Examinations Officers must be included in all correspondence. Once confirmed, the examination date may only be changed in **exceptional** circumstances.

Once the date and number of entries are confirmed with the examiner, he/she draws up a timetable for the examination and forwards this to the teacher. If changes are made to the number of entries, schools/colleges should notify the visiting examiner so that the examination day timetable can be kept accurate. When completing the timetable, the examiner will request the assessment of all solo choreographic tasks to take place first, followed by the performances in duet/trios. This order should be strictly adhered to and wherever possible the order of the students for both elements of the assessment should ideally **remain the same**. Duets/trios will only be viewed **once** by the examiner. If students have to perform twice with different partners, they will be assessed on the **first** showing of the duet/trio.

Recording of assessed work

The rules outlining how to record NEA work can be found on <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/dance/as-and-a-level/dance-7236/assessment-resources>

Section A - Solo Choreography and Solo Performance

All practical questions are devised with a view to developing not only the choreographic and performances skills needed to complete the tasks, but also skills such as independent research, investigation, contextual understanding and the ability to make links to the theoretical content of the course. Careful preparation is vital and underpins and informs the theoretical/written aspect of the course. The questions are not designed to be a stimulus but, as in the written assessment, an opportunity to focus on, develop and present coherent outcomes around a **specific** topic/theme.

All three questions were attempted this year with question 3 being the most popular, followed by question 2 and finally question 1. Popularity of individual questions varied within individual centres.

The length of the programme note for the solo choreography has a maximum word limit of **300 words**. This should allow students the opportunity to explain their own individual interpretation and approach to the chosen task, synthesising how they have translated their research and subsequent understanding of the chosen topic into the final dance idea(s). It is therefore not necessary for students to describe the choreographed dance they are about to present. Having a word limit encourages students to develop a succinct writing style and therefore should **not** be disregarded.

Points relating to the choreography for each question

Question 01

This was the least popular question, but it seemed to attract the students who were clearly interested in form and structure, sometimes resulting in very skillful, thoughtfully crafted and complex solo presentations. Most students focused on the task set, with the majority concentrating on rotational, helical and reflectional symmetry, although other types of symmetry were explored to some extent.

The more successful dances revealed a judicious choice of the three movement components, with an appropriate focus on the spatial and dynamic elements. Manipulation of the movement material chosen was also inventive in relation to the task. This type of thoughtful approach to selection and manipulation thus provided a perfect opportunity to carefully consider structure, in relation to both movement material and the sections of the dance.

Occasionally, presentations involved the use of props or interaction with items of the set. Sometimes, these were linked to a theme to enable a more imaginative adaptation of the movement components. The degree of success depended on the extent to which the exploration of symmetry that was linked to geometry remained the focus of the choreography. Sometimes students became too sidetracked with a narrative and therefore ignored the source (i.e. the crux of the task).

The less successful solos were repetitive in their content and therefore became predictable, e.g. a movement performed on one side was then performed on the other side and then repeated throughout the duration of the dance. In-depth understanding of symmetry seemed to be missing, relying instead on a superficial exploration of the concept. The choice of accompaniment was usually appropriate but not always used to full effect, i.e. to enhance variation, contrast and texture.

Question 02

This question attracted a range of responses. Unfortunately, in some cases the relevance of the content was not always clear and there was frequently a lack of reference to any imagery contained within the poem. The themes chosen focused mainly on water, the rain cycle and/or rain's effect on nature. The programme notes usually showed evidence of research but some students chose to move away from the actual poem to themes of life and death or a narrative

emerging out of their own life experiences. With this type of question, the **whole** poem is the source and therefore should not be ignored/disregarded.

The more successful solos reflected relevant themes and imagery embedded within the poem, utilising the structure of the poem to full effect. This then informed a relevant dance structure and a coherence in relation to the task. Transitions were seamless, and ideas were thoughtfully explored and manipulated. Pertinent research was clearly in evidence and the aural setting was explored to enhance mood and atmosphere.

The less successful solos became sidetracked with personal narratives which bore no resemblance to the task in hand. The content lacked variety in the action content, contrast in the dynamics and clarity in structure. The manipulation of movement material through the use of choreographic devices was limited, thus prohibiting genuine exploration of ideas in any depth or breadth.

Question 03

This was the most popular question and the choreographic outcomes covered a wide range of marks. This type of question can lead to a personal interpretation of research which can be very exciting to view. The programme notes were often informative and helpful, providing appropriate research and insightful analysis of the findings. However, as with the other two tasks this year, some students decided to turn the response into a theme closer to their own personal journey through emotional trauma, thus straying from the focus and context of the task.

The more successful solos showed a clear reference to the functions and symbolism of Janus and used appropriate accompaniment to enhance the intention and/or mood. There was development in the content and progression in the structure. The aspects of Janus linked to two faces, journey, past/future, transitions, gateways, often helped the students to develop the clarity of their dance structure. The choice of action and spatial design showed variety and there was a range of dynamics. The chosen accompaniment was often quite powerful and emotive in its progression.

The less successful solos either moved away from the actual question or just focused on one aspect of Janus, e.g. conflict or gates, which showed insufficient exploration of the question and limited relevance. The content became somewhat repetitive and therefore required more manipulation of the movement components through the use of choreographic devices. Transitions needed further consideration, which would have informed a more coherent structure.

Points relating to the performance of the solo

In some schools/colleges, there were some outstanding performances of the choreographed solo with students demonstrating a highly articulate level of technical skill, spatial and dynamic control and use of interpretative skills. It was obvious that time had been allocated to develop these skills alongside the choreographic process.

In general, the less efficient performances revealed insufficient technical training to achieve an appropriate standard at AS level. These students appeared at ease with more static and gestural work but found precision and control of bodily skills, when travelling and getting to and from the floor, difficult. Spatial and dynamic control was in evidence but needed more attention at times.

The development of focus, projection, musicality and dynamic emphasis should be an important aspect of any practical assessment preparation and should have equal importance alongside the development of the choreography.

Examiners noted this year that some performances looked under-rehearsed, which meant the higher levels of response in relation to performance skills could not be accessed by students.

The standard of dress and awareness of safe practice were appropriate in most schools/colleges. Sometimes, when props were used by students, insufficient rehearsal meant that the use of the prop affected the demonstration of control during the performance. Sometimes props and other aspects of physical setting were used to the detriment of the clarity the performance and choreographic presentation.

Section B - Performance within a duet/trio

Question 04

Within the AS specification the assessment of the duet/trio task is clearly linked to an investigation of key characteristics of style within a genre or genres. Unfortunately, this focus of the task was ignored in some schools/colleges, refer to section 3.1.3 in the specification.

The task can provide students an introduction into the analysis of style and how to present the analysis in both practical and written presentations (performance and programme note). Unfortunately, analytical understanding of style was sometimes sadly missing from both the programme note and dance presentation.

In schools/colleges where the task was considered in an appropriate way there were different approaches to the creation of the duet/trios:

- links to professional work being studied within either the compulsory or optional area of study chosen
- dance material used which had emerged from a workshop environment and developed by the teacher, students or both
- original work by the student(s)
- original work created by the teacher specifically for the cohort
- the whole of the cohort performing the same dance (which allowed for interchangeable roles)
- the whole of the cohort performing the same dance with individual variation for each duet/trio
- every duet/trio completely different within the school/college.

Students achieving lower marks showed some or all of the following:

- a lack of confidence
- insufficient rehearsal
- content which revealed their weaknesses rather than their strengths
- choreography which did not allow them to respond fully to the criteria.

High achievement was gained in centres where individual strengths of students had been considered and where sufficient time had been given to the rehearsal process.

The submission of a programme note which outlined the students' analysis of style was important to inform the examiner. Some schools/colleges had not recognised the need to refer to the exploration of the key characteristics of style and programme notes became sidetracked with references to theme and/or choreographic intention. The programme note can be written in collaboration with the teacher, and therefore could be carried out as a written exercise within the theoretical aspect of the course. **A programme note for all students must be submitted, even when a generic programme note has been used for all duet/trios.**

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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