

DRAMA

Paper 0411/11
Written Examination

General comments

It was gratifying to note that many candidates appeared to be somewhat better prepared this session. Generally speaking, answers demonstrated more insight, and in particular there was evidence of a more secure approach to the discussion of the pre-release extract. However, there is still room for development of a greater understanding of the requirement to discuss the application of practical, skills-based solutions to dramatic problems.

The discussion of devised work continues to improve, with candidates showing a slightly better understanding of core techniques and the vocabulary used to describe them. There is still abundant evidence of Centres not having attempted a practical realisation of the pre-release stimuli and in such cases all but the most able candidates are disadvantaged since most are unable to 'imagine' a realistic performance scenario and project an appropriate range of practical outcomes.

Centres are urged to be aware that there is a significant difference between approaching text as drama and text as literature. There were cases where whole groups of clearly very able candidates wrote most eloquently in response to the questions on *Hobson's Choice*; they were able to analyse relationships and expound upon socio-historical context but unfortunately did not engage with what the questions actually seek to elicit, i.e. responses dealing with the solving of dramatic problems through the application of technique.

There are still some examples of Centres teaching 'method' at the expense of 'technique'. Some candidates continue to show a lack of differentiation between the factors governing a specified skill or technique, e.g. characterisation and the various exercises and methods used to achieve it, e.g. 'role on the wall'. This comment is not to discourage reference to method but to highlight that it is technique which is significant to accessing the mark scheme.

There are still examples of candidates writing excessively long answers to **Section A** questions which have only a very few marks allocated to them. This is often at the expense of answers to questions in **Sections B** and **C**, where typically the same candidates run out of time.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Questions 1 – 5 *Hobson's Choice*

Question 1

The vast majority of candidates were able to suggest a suitable costume for Doctor MacFarlane. Most perceived the significance of the period in which the play was set and showed an awareness of the materials/styles of clothing that would have been worn. A few candidates chose to mention a white coat which, though not strictly speaking appropriate for the period, was nevertheless credited by Examiners.

Question 2

Most candidates were able to offer three valid features of the relationship between Maggie and Willie. The most common were Maggie's 'wearing the trousers', her maternal proprietorship over Willie and her slightly detached 'business first' view of their relationship. Also popular was her desire to educate Willie and make a 'man' (of substance) of him.

Question 3

There were various opinions concerning Albert's character. The most often cited were his profession and his perceived avarice, but also valid were his sense of awe in respect of Maggie and his straight talking. Most candidates were able to suggest two of these. Unfortunately, some candidates failed to support their suggestions with relevant lines from the extract, as required by the question.

Question 4

Responses varied. The better ones were concerned with clearly identified moments during the extract where specific characters were given opportunity to use precise areas of the stage or particular aspects of the set in relation to stage position. The strongest responses not only cited key moments but also explained in some detail the kind of dramatic effect that would be achieved, relating this to the perception of the audience. Answers that suggested a more general opportunity such as that a character should 'walk around centre stage' did not access the full range of marks.

Question 5

This question called for directorial understanding of practical performance to communicate the relationship between the Hobson family in a given excerpt from the extract. Most descriptions of stage action achieved at least two or three of the five marks. Marks were lost where characterisation was discussed, sometimes in detail, without translating this into character action. Character motivation was often discussed at length, but again marks were lost where this discussion failed to address how a director might ensure these motivations were communicated to an audience.

Questions 6 – 8 *Devised work*

Question 6

This was a question which was readily answered by most candidates: nearly all felt confident enough to identify two moments in their performance that were effective and many were able to explain why in dramatic terms. Weaker candidates sometimes recounted the story of their piece instead of or in addition to identifiable effective moments. These were a minority but it may be useful for Centres to bear in mind that candidates are likely to gain the advantage where they have created performances which have strong and well-developed dramatic structures, and which have been adapted through practical exploration to become effective before an audience.

Question 7

A common issue here was that a significant number of candidates felt compelled to offer a detailed account of the plot or engage in extended narrative in order to highlight the relationship between the two chosen characters. The question is seeking to draw out ways in which the relationship was dramatised not the events surrounding the relationship. Again, the sought-for response is one that is specific about technique and the application of skills, together, where appropriate, with extraneous effects. In evaluating the success of these techniques the focus should be on how technique is used to achieve effect from an audience perspective.

Question 8

This question caused problems for many. The central source of perplexity seemed to be focused on the definition of the term 'performance space'. Those who had utilised conventional venues with proscenium arch or arena stages had an opportunity to be specific about how applications such as performance space zoning helped or hindered their performance. There were others who utilised open-air spaces, but these too had the option of discussion of how the space contributed to the performance itself. In many cases though, candidates tended to fixate upon the scenario rather than discuss the use of space; many chose to discuss 'the street' itself whilst neglecting the stage chosen to represent it. A few Centres appear to have staged the piece in a literal street and this caused confusion amongst weaker candidates.

Section B

Questions 9 – 11 *Hobson's Choice*

Question 9

This was a popular question and many candidates showed a sound understanding of Brighouse's stage directions. Though no marks are awarded for diagrams as such, the more able candidates used diagrams to underpin detailed discussion of key moments where the action and the set could be used in combination to achieve clearly specified outcomes. Successful answers were able to demonstrate opportunities afforded by the set for actor and director to bring out textual nuances and to maximise dramatic effect. An example of this would be use of the stairs to create moments of tension and to reflect changes in status.

Question 10

A minority attempted this question: candidates who offered responses tended to fall into the trap of proposing a style of performance at the expense of characterisation and the presentation of relationships to focus on the humanity of the piece. Typically such responses sought to make the play something radically different, e.g. by adopting a 'realist' approach that inevitably transformed the characters so that they were no longer recognisable.

Question 11

This was a very popular question which was for the most part answered well. Most candidates showed good general understanding of the character of Hobson and seemed confident in identifying a range of Hobson's character traits using them as a starting point on which to base a discussion centred on physicality but which also explored the character's underlying emotional and psychological states.

Section C

Questions 12 – 14 *Devised work*

Question 12

This was a popular choice, usually successful where the summary was brief as required by the question. Sometimes an over-lengthy summary allowed proportionately less time to outline dramatic elements for which the marks were awarded. Some maintained a running summary alongside the details of action, an approach the question was structured to avoid, tending as it does to sideline partially the discussion for which marks could be awarded. Many candidates discussed a range of dramatic techniques and their effectiveness but it was the minority which managed to communicate what it was the group was trying to achieve.

Question 13

This question tended to polarise responses with the weaker candidates being unduly reliant on plot and narrative thereby missing the point. The more able responses were, typically, able to identify the nature of the chosen performance space and how it was utilised to achieve the stated aim or aims of the piece overall. The best responses justified the decisions made in terms of space, style and physical action and, where they also were able to evaluate the success of the chosen strategy, were successful in accessing the highest mark band.

Question 14

Again, this was variable in its success. Most of the performances seemed to approach the theme literally and most appeared to include some aspect of dancing in a street. Many candidates got bogged down in a discussion centered upon the challenges of creating a believable street scene on stage whilst others went to considerable lengths to show how they had used a real street for the performance in order to attain absolute credibility.

This of course proved to disadvantage candidates since the aspect which they were being asked to discuss was the intended *atmosphere* of the piece together with an evaluation of their success in achieving it. Only the most perceptive candidates realised that success in achieving atmosphere is measured in terms of



audience perception and how the performers convey a given message in a way designed to impact on the audience.

DRAMA

Paper 0411/12
Written Examination

General comments

Generally speaking, understanding of the paper has improved over recent sessions. Centres show an increasingly good knowledge of the pre-release extract and are preparing candidates well for the range of questions that are asked in **Section A**.

Marks awarded were in line with previous sessions. However, there were seemingly more candidates able to access the higher marks in **Sections B** and **C**, which is pleasing to note. Nevertheless, candidates continue to show a lack of application of technical knowledge and questions that require them to explore dramatisation, dramatic effect or to suggest practical solutions show a limited knowledge base.

Centres are reminded that it is expected that the work based on the three pre-release stimuli should be performed, as questions in **Sections A** and **C** require an exploration of aspects of candidates' performances. Centres that do not allow candidates to explore their work in a practical way are clearly disadvantaging them as they are then unable to access particular questions which ask them to explore, for example, audience experience, strengths and weaknesses of performance or technical aspects of the performance.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Questions 1 – 5 *The Winslow Boy*

Question 1

Many candidates recognised that Dickie had just returned from Church, and were able to suggest an appropriate costume for this event. Equally, candidates who correctly identified the extract being set in 1912 and were able to suggest an appropriate costume for this era were also credited. A small number of candidates incorrectly stated that the play was set in 1946 and suggested a costume for this era. Marks were awarded to candidates who recognised Dickie's 'large, noisy and cheerful' character and were able to suggest a 'ridiculous' costume that illustrated this. Candidates who offered a suggestion as to what Dickie might be wearing but were not able to offer a reason for this suggestion were given 1 mark.

Question 2

A large number of candidates showed a good understanding of the text and were able to suggest a range of aspects that showed the relationship between Arthur and Dickie. These included the respect shown towards each other; the good sense of humour enjoyed by both characters; the heated conflict that created tension; the loving, caring father and son relationship; the respect shown towards Arthur by his son and the attention-seeking nature of Dickie, jealous at the relationship he perceived to exist between Arthur and Ronnie.

Question 3

There was an excellent response, for the most part, from candidates, who instantly recognised Violet's caring nature. Many candidates also illustrated the motherly approach she showed towards Ronnie. Other examples were her reliable and trustworthy nature; her dedication to the family and the practicality she showed towards her role. There was some disagreement between candidates, some of whom felt that Violet was well educated whilst others felt she was less so; both suggestions were credited. Further credit was given if the candidate was able to provide an appropriate quotation from the text for each suggestion.

Question 4

Many candidates were able to suggest a variety of props or furniture and cite specific points in the text where they could be used. This reflects the drawing room where the extract was set which was likely to contain a range of items and furniture. A few candidates explored how props or furniture might be used symbolically, having Arthur in a larger chair than the others to reflect his status in the house was a popular suggestion. However, a surprising number of candidates mistook parts of the set, such as windows, for items of furniture or props. Furthermore, candidates generally had difficulty in identifying the dramatic effect of their suggestions and were unable to identify the interaction between the use of the prop itself and the audience experience that this might create.

Question 5

A range of responses was given. Candidates who provided a summary of the scene could only be given 1 or 2 marks. More successful candidates were able to explore a range of practical solutions such as describing the mood, atmosphere, voice control, eye contact, pace and posture. Highest marks were given to candidates who were also able to make appropriate references to the text showing a systematic approach to the extract and recognising specific points where the mood or atmosphere might change and explaining reasons for their suggestions.

Questions 6 – 8 *Devised work*

Question 6

Weaker candidates simply recounted the story of the piece. There was no credit available for this. Candidates were asked to identify two moments that they considered important and to show an ability to take an overview of their piece. Generally, candidates were not able to support their choices and provided only weak suggestions as to why their chosen moments were effective. Any suggestion that clearly identified audience experience was credited. A number of candidates stated that the effect on the audience was a change of colour in the spot light: this limited approach to the question was not credited.

Question 7

A number of candidates explored the relationship between more than two characters or, in some cases, the devised piece only had one character with a split personality or dual roles: candidates were not penalised for this. The question was looking for an awareness of how characters might be created in performance. This requires a technical understanding and in particular an awareness of practical solutions. Many candidates explored dialogue alone; whilst this was credited, more was needed to access the full range of marks. An awareness of dramatic technique was not evident in many Centres. Many candidates simply provided a summary of their piece rather than exploring how characters and their interactions were crafted and dramatised.

Question 8

There was some confusion between the word 'staging' and the word 'stage'. The focus of the question was on the creation of the set and the way this informs the staging. A large number of candidates explored the use of a specific type of stage, such as a proscenium arch, rather than exploring how the set might inform dramatic decisions made. In a few cases, the choice of performance space clearly did not reflect the needs of the piece.

Section B

Questions 9 – 11 *The Winslow Boy*

Question 9

The question sought to explore what dramatic outcomes might be created through the design of a set. Many candidates recognised that the play was set in 1912 and gave a description of a 'nostalgic recreation of bygone age', illustrating an 'upper-middle-class comfort'. Candidates who gave a literalistic interpretation whilst playing safe with a traditional design could not access the full range of marks available. More successful candidates recognised the importance of not only discussing what goes into the space but more importantly the proxemics of the design.

Question 10

This was not a popular choice and only a small minority of candidates attempted this question. In most cases, candidates who chose to answer it showed a limited understanding of the question. Candidates who wrote more successful responses were able to focus on specific examples of how the interaction of characters demonstrates the feelings and desires of the human heart, and how the development of the action is dependent on the reaction of characters to the things that move the action forward in the play. To access the full range of marks candidates needed to cite specific practical solutions that might be possible with detailed reference to the text.

Question 11

The question was in two parts: an understanding of the character itself and also suggestions as to how this might be brought out in performance. Candidates who only answered one part of the question limited themselves to the 11-15 mark band. Many candidates showed a good understanding of Catherine's character. However, their level of awareness of practical solutions was limited for the most part. Candidates who scored the most marks were also able to clearly discuss the contrasting, contradictory nature of Catherine supported by a sustained insight into practical approaches.

Section C

Questions 12 – 14 *Devised work*

Question 12

Weaker candidates merely offered a summary of the piece limiting themselves to the 1-5 mark band. The key to the question was the ability to explore how the piece communicated with its audience and what message/effect it might create. Stronger candidates were able to discuss dramatisation, exploring structure, use of characters, dialogue, performance space and the way in which moments of dramatic tension were created. Candidates were also expected to evaluate their experience.

Question 13

It was pleasing to note that Centres have heeded advice given in previous sessions, and fewer candidates were reliant solely on diagrams this session. Many candidates were able to explore their performance space although too often it was difficult to pick out the relevant detail from amongst the narrative approach that many candidates chose to use. More successful candidates were clearly able to discuss their piece exploring specific details with regards to the performance space (dimensions, layout, nature) as well as a clear explanation of the decision-making process.

Question 14

Weaker candidates set out the intent of the piece but then failed to explore the reality of this in performance. Candidates who merely supplied a narrative of the piece were also disadvantaged. More successful candidates showed an understanding that often reactions of audiences are unanticipated and were able to discuss the reaction they thought they would get and how this worked out in reality. To access the full range of marks, candidates needed to explore what experience was felt by the audience in terms of the content, style, venue and characters. A good range of dramatic ideas was needed to access the top band.

DRAMA

Paper 0411/13
Written Examination

General comments

It was clear to Examiners that there is some continuing improvement across Centres this year. A number of candidates showed very good knowledge of some of the technical aspects of performance. However, it is evident that there is still scope to widen creative thinking and practical understanding of devising and staging of performance.

Whilst each section carries almost the same number of marks, it was not unusual for there to be disproportionate focus on **Section A** and especially on the first few questions. There were also instances where candidates appeared short of time at the end of **Section A** and, in a small number of cases, not all questions were answered. Some imbalance between **Sections B** and **C** was noted, although only a very small number wrote very little or nothing for one of these two sections. In contrast and as seen in previous sessions, candidates who had planned their time and strategy carefully produced confident responses.

Centres appear to have responded to the June 2009 report in that the quality of candidates' handwriting was much less of an issue in this session: Examiners reported only a few scripts that were difficult to read.

An area for concern, however, is where candidates in some Centres tended towards character discussion in the manner of an English Literature essay. Drama is a radically different subject to Literature in which the text is a stimulus for action much more than for analysis of style and characterisation.

There was again a sense that, in some cases, candidates appeared not to have completed all of the practical aspects of this paper, resulting in a lack of understanding of key dramatic ideas. This was most evident in discussion of the devised work, and, as before, the strongest responses came from those Centres where ideas had been explored fully, practically and realistically in performance such that candidate responses demonstrated confident critical reflection of their own experience of creating drama. It is essential to appreciate that candidates at this level are unlikely to possess the facility to project their thinking into a scenario of 'virtual performance', and that the intellectual limitations arising from this are almost always evident in their written answers.

The way candidates approached the discussion of technical issues again showed some improvement although there was still some reliance on lighting to contribute more than is viable to the action whilst missing what it could properly contribute to atmosphere. Other impractical ideas were offered: a crackling fire would cause only confusion and irritation to an audience who would not be close enough to it to recognise what the noise was. Subtlety and the sense that 'less can be more' were uncommon in the answers seen.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Questions 1 – 5 *Strife*

Question 1

Most responses addressed the question successfully and gave good costume suggestions. Where marks were lost, this was usually due to a generic and unspecific answer e.g. 'A typical butler's costume'; or where there was no statement in support of the costume choice. Credit was awarded where specific or broadly appropriate details were given of a formal servant role in a well-to-do household, below the masters but above the workmen. Period costume details were not essential but a few lost marks suggesting modern informal costume.

Question 2

Most candidates were able to offer a valid characteristic for at least one of the three directors. Candidates were united in their opposition to the Chairman, the three have distinct personalities. Candidates were awarded full marks where they were able accurately to identify one characteristic for each as delineated in the extracts. There was more than one possible aspect candidates could offer, but most responses identified Wilder as negative and complaining. Some did not so readily identify that Wanklin was more questioning and reasoned; Scantlebury was generally recognised to be a weaker character, more sympathetic to the workmen.

Question 3

This question was usually answered with some degree of success. It did not require candidates to suggest how the character of Harness should be acted, but credit was given where some did so and related their ideas to an appropriate personality aspect and to a relevant line reference. Marks were awarded where it was identified that Harness is striving to maintain a fluent and calm manner against the stubbornness of both leaders. As in **Question 2** there were several aspects possible, and where more than two were identified the most appropriate were credited. For full marks candidates needed to give a reference from the text in support of personality aspects. Mood or attitude that may be present in a single moment were not credited. Some responses drew on the lines given in the question itself. This was useful where it generated a point regarding the character's openness and honesty, but less so where Harness was described as angry and disgusted.

Question 4

This was a very successful question for candidates of all abilities. The china box handled by Edgar and the frock Enid is making were the props most frequently cited, but items of furniture and set, even where not physically handled by characters, were accepted within the terms of the question where candidates were specific in identifying an action relating to that object and which created dramatic impact. This could, for example, include repeated glances by a particular character towards the double doors waiting for the arrival of another, which generated tension.

Question 5

Most descriptions of stage action achieved at least two or three of the five marks in this question, which called for directorial understanding of practical performance to communicate the relationship between father and son in this short section. Marks were lost where characterisation was discussed, sometimes in detail, without translating this into character action. The rising conflict characterised by Edgar's angry words against Anthony's withdrawal into silence was readily discussed by all. Credit was given for appropriate actions and particularly where imaginative and subtle details of physicality and proxemics were offered which would serve to illuminate the text for an audience.

Questions 6 – 8 *Devised work*

Question 6

This was a question which was readily answered by most candidates. Marks were sometimes lost by omission where the celebratory element was not clearly identified. Weaker candidates sometimes recounted the story of their piece instead of or in addition to identifiable moments of celebration. Some pieces appeared to be so brief as not to provide opportunity to discuss more than one moment. These were a minority but it may be useful for Centres to bear in mind that candidates are likely to be advantaged in answering questions on their devised work where they have created performances which have strong and well-developed dramatic structures, and which have been adapted through practical exploration to become effective before an audience.

Question 7

Clear and concise discussion of practical usage of performance space was not always present in responses seen in this session. Candidates were able in most cases to provide at least a clear description of basic staging at the opening of the piece which would be worth a single mark for this question. There were no marks for a plan or sketch of the stage area but where present this sometimes served to focus candidate thinking. Higher marks were awarded where responses discussed intent in the use of levels, stage areas, character positioning and movement in the space, and how changes in the way space had been used to

progress the action. Where it could be clearly shown to delineate an area of the stage for part of the action, lighting was sometimes relevantly discussed.

Question 8

This question was broad in scope and sometimes well answered across the ability range, accommodating both multiple 'types' and solo performance where a second character was implicit, as well as any chosen pair of devised characters. It was not essential that two *main* characters were discussed as there is much to commend the exploration of two minor roles: however, as in **Question 6** above, in some answers the discussion was superficial and the piece appeared undeveloped.

Better answers often included how some aspect of change in the relationship was dramatised. There were concise answers that discussed character similarities and/or contrasts using a range of dramatic techniques such as voice, dialogue, physical action, body language, facial expression and gesture. Some weaker answers tended to recount the story.

Section B

Questions 9 – 11 *Strife*

Question 9

This was a popular question. A furniture list and an occasional over-reliance on lighting tended to limit some answers. Contrasts in colours and textures, such as hard dark polished wood against softer more colourful furnishings, and the presence of business items such as files and papers in a home setting, frequently featured as evidence of the balance sought in the question. Those answers which offered coherence and an overall design concept, in which each object played a meaningful part and which included also a purposeful sense of space and its usage, tended to attract marks in the upper range.

Question 10

A minority attempted this question: candidates who offered responses tended to focus more on the portrayal of conflict than on the inevitability of compromise. Where some understanding was evident that pride is a character flaw in Anthony and/or Roberts this was rewarded, and where disunity amongst the directors was mentioned this was credited also. However, answers usually focused on Anthony's intransigence, and reference to the directors tended to be included in weaker answers which often narrated the action given in the text with a restatement of the message as given in the question, rather than providing directorial ideas for its realisation.

Question 11

This was a popular question which was answered reasonably well by focusing on the physical action that would be generated by events in the text, and most candidates showed good general understanding of the character of Roberts in the context of the extract. However, few responses recognised the significance of the directors' brief but key discussion of Roberts's invention. Credit was awarded where candidates understood how this could inform the actor that this is a clever but disadvantaged man in a justifiably personal battle. Few observed that Roberts does not use it as an argument himself in bargaining with the directors, and this could aid the actor in playing the deep personal and tragic dignity in the character at the head of a workforce of more humble and simple men. It can be advantageous in exploring a text to treat all dialogue and directions as clues to further meaning; furthermore what is unsaid can be as significant as what is said.

Some candidates simply gave a running commentary on the characterisation and delivery of dialogue in the text where Roberts appears. Some extremes of physical expression were sometimes described. Although this was credited where practical and playable, better answers tended to recognise that restraint in Roberts's physicality juxtaposed with his great internal emotion was probably more effective in dramatic terms.

Section C

Questions 12 – 14 *Devised work*

Question 12

This was a popular question, usually successful where the summary was brief as required by the question. Sometimes an over-lengthy summary allowed proportionately less time to outline dramatic elements for which the marks were awarded. Some maintained a running summary alongside the details of action, an approach the question was structured to avoid, tending as it does to sideline partially the discussion for which marks could be awarded. Many competently discussed a number of dramatic techniques used and their effectiveness but it was a minority who showed a good grasp of what their group was trying to achieve. The best responses led with the central idea to be communicated, and structured the essay accordingly.

Question 13

This was also a reasonably popular question and was very accessible across the range of abilities. This was especially evident where complex reactions were intended: less strong candidates were able to discuss how sympathy could be mitigated and open to different interpretations by the action presented. Less imaginative responses tended to describe uncomplicated plot and character action with a concluding statement that these events shown would generate sympathy in an audience.

Question 14

This question was the least popular in this section, but was usually answered successfully, especially where the space was used imaginatively and practically with a range of staging devices. Like other answers in this section and in **Section B** also, where an overview was taken at the outset of the central ideas to be communicated, the answer tended to be well focused on how the staging achieved the intended effect. Where this was carefully drawn out with good practical understanding and some attention to detail in the description, marks in the upper range could be awarded. Split staging, different levels and representational stage furniture used imaginatively to create different locations featured in better answers, especially where there was discussion of how the set gave emphasis to and heightened the acting. Aspects of lighting, sound and sometimes visual projection were included in some responses. These were credited as part of usage of the space where a specified and relevant dramatic effect was generated, for example where birdsong established a garden or field location.

DRAMA

Paper 0411/02
Coursework

General comments

As in previous sessions, there was a good range of work presented for this paper, and Moderators reported the broad variety of repertoire presented by candidates, which appeared to take note of the lists published in Principal Examiner's reports in recent years. A similar list has been produced for this session, and may be found in the Appendix at the end of this report.

The moderation process ran smoothly and the majority of Centres submitted their materials by the deadline specified in the syllabus. All arrived safely in the UK and far fewer damaged packages or broken videos were received this session. Most Centres also organised the contents of the package in a manner that enabled the Moderator to identify quickly the candidates in the sample.

Sample of work

Some Centres did not identify the sample but it is essential that all Centres do so rather than leaving the task to the Moderator. The sample should consist of the performance work of six candidates (Centres with fewer than six should send the work of all their candidates) and **must** include the candidates with the highest and lowest marks awarded, the remainder being spread evenly across the mark range. Centres are reminded, however, that they should send the Individual Candidate Mark Sheets for **all** candidates, irrespective of whether they form part of the sample or not.

Completion of Individual Candidate Mark Sheets

It was helpful that so many Centres completed the mark sheets electronically as this allowed more commentary to be included in the space available. It was noted, however, that the version of the form used was not always the most up-to-date. Centres who wish to complete their forms electronically should contact the IGCSE Drama Product Manager at CIE to request the most recent version.

Please note that for the text-based pieces, it is helpful to include the name of the playwright as well as the name of the play on each candidate's mark sheet. The mark sheet must also indicate which of the options listed in the syllabus has been chosen as the stimulus for the devised piece(s).

The quality of the information contained on the candidates' mark sheets was quite variable. Whilst it was encouraging that the comments to justify the marks were generally insightful and helpful, Moderators reported that many forms contained mathematical errors. A few of these were the result of incorrect addition but most were because of rounding marks up or down too early in the process. Centres are reminded that marks should be left as decimal fractions for the final mark for *each* Assessment Objective and only rounded up or down for the candidate's *total* mark (the mark which is transferred to the MS1 mark sheet).

Recordings of performances

The quality of the recordings of the performances was generally acceptable, although there were examples of poor recording technique where the camera was seemingly placed on the floor, thus giving an unusual aspect to the performance. In other instances, the camera was either too close or too far away, both extremes serving to distort the impact of the performance. The most distracting situation was where the cameraman attempted to follow the action of a Group piece by training the camera only on the person speaking at any one time.

The production of the recordings was sometimes a cause for concern. The majority of submissions were on DVD, and Moderators were grateful for the time taken to produce this, especially where it had been necessary to create chapters to enable quick and easy access to each piece. However, if the work is submitted on DVD, it is essential that the finished disc is playable on a standard DVD player and is in a standard PAL or NTSC format. Any other video data files on a DVD-R are not acceptable and the Centre may be asked to produce a new version of the recording.

Centres are asked to test the final DVD before submission to ensure that it is playable on a different machine to the one on which it was made, also paying close attention to the sound quality of the final version. Care should be taken if the work is transferred to a DVD from another form of recording. There were a few DVDs where candidates' bodies took on distorted shapes, their legs seemed to widen and their clothes became covered in stripes as a result of the transfer process. This was distracting for the Moderator and undermined the performance intention of the pieces.

There were some Centres where it was difficult to hear the candidates as they were filmed outside, and bird song, or the sound of traffic noise, or the incidental sounds of children playing, or bells going off interfered with the concentration of the performers. The sound on the recording was also affected.

Identification of candidates

The majority of candidates were easy to identify as they spoke clearly to the camera, stating their name and candidate number before each performance began. It was helpful when they also held a sign with their name and candidate number displayed. However, there was a small minority of very poor quality recordings, with mumbled, unintelligible identifications of the candidates. Each candidate should be clearly identified prior to each performance and identified on the running order of the DVD.

Drama for stage, not for film

Once again, Centres are reminded that film-style acting is inappropriate for this syllabus. Work should be produced for a live audience wherever possible, rather than set in locations that do not allow an audience to attend. Although Moderators viewed performances only through recordings, it was clear that work presented in front of a live audience tended to lift the performance energy of the candidates and allowed for better performer-audience interaction.

The use of screenplays was still in evidence this session, particularly for solos, and these were often a poor imitation of the original screen version rather than an interpretation for live performance. Moderators would like to re-iterate the syllabus requirement that repertoire must be taken from published plays since TV drama and films are not suited to stage performance.

Similarly, the recording of the performances should not be edited as if they were films. Some recordings contained evidence of editing as performances were fragmented. Some candidates appeared to re-do sections of their pieces several times in order to eradicate mistakes, which is not allowed. As an ephemeral art form, drama performances should be in 'real time' and unedited.

Text-based performance

A wide range of texts was used and most were appropriate to both the aspirations and abilities of the candidates. As in previous years, a selection of examples of repertoire used is included in this report (see Appendix below).

Moderators reported that the standard of theatrical stagecraft was often better than in previous sessions, with a better sense of production values and an improved understanding of the role of lighting, sound, costume and make-up. The best performances were where candidates had the opportunity to experience a range of genres and styles. The strongest performance work was of a very high standard: disciplined, well focused, with artistic integrity and a strong understanding, conveying a sense of emotional truth.

Most candidates seemed more at ease with text-based work, particularly weaker performers who seemed to work better when given a framework to support their work. These candidates often found the devised work more challenging and appeared awkward and mechanistic, mumbling lines in a manner that showed that they did not truly have ownership of those words and could not breathe life into them.

Those who used physicality and characterisation generally scored higher than those who merely stood at a chair reciting a monologue. It was clear that some candidates had spent little time rehearsing and their lines as they were hesitant in their delivery or gabbled the lines without imbuing them with any real meaning.

Centres are urged to find texts that suit the needs and abilities of their candidates. There were some excellent examples of using culturally appropriate texts to great advantage. There were also some examples of traditional performance work, and, as in previous sessions, playwrights such as Oscar Wilde were very popular. Some work was exceptionally strong and showed an excellent understanding of this style of theatre. This was balanced by some extremely weak work where the candidates struggled to show a real understanding of the sophisticated stagecraft required to bring such challenging work to life. Candidates should be wary of tackling work that is beyond them in terms of understanding and skills. There were poor examples of performers trying to act with gravitas beyond their years but not having the appropriate vocal and physical skills to carry it off.

Devised performance

The standard of devised work was often less strong than that of the text-based pieces. The syllabus lists a number of options available each year for devised work, and candidates should select a style or approach with which they are at ease. In many cases there was no reference whatsoever to the chosen option on the Individual Candidate Mark Sheet, and Moderators were left to infer the style from the performance. Centres are requested to indicate clearly which of the syllabus options has been chosen. This is also relevant to the awarding of marks for Assessment Objective B, where the nature of the devised work will obviously be influenced by which option has been selected.

The devised work varied greatly but was often better structured than in the June 2009 session. The use of physical theatre, movement and music was highly skilled in some Centres. There were several examples of devised work that was powerful and innovative, and expressed a high level of sensitivity and understanding of stagecraft. These performances often had a well-developed sense of physicality and were thus able to convey their ideas well. The strongest work demonstrated personal engagement with the drama, particularly where candidates had chosen to focus on themes and issues that were obviously important to them. There were some strong examples of dramatically effective political theatre and some examples of good interaction with the audience.

Many strong pieces were issue-based, especially where the issue was explored in a creative and interesting way. Where candidates had taken ownership of the creative process and had clarity of intention and focus, this was translated into strong performance work that had a real sense of purpose. Vague themes and issues produced wishy-washy performances that were ineffective.

Some of the devised pieces were pale imitations of the dramatic stimuli, which did not allow the candidates to exploit fully the potential of the performance task. There was much mundane devised work that was clichéd and predictable and which focused on angst-ridden issues in a very superficial and limited way. A number of candidates seemed to feel that playing 'muzak' throughout a performance would heighten its emotional intensity. In reality, it had the opposite effect, as the biggest weakness in performance was the vocal delivery, with under-projection and diction being an issue.

Appendix: Examples of repertoire used for text-based performances

Individual pieces

Paul Ableman	<i>She's Dead</i>
Joseph Arnone	<i>Worst Date Ever</i>
Alan Ayckbourn	<i>Absent Friends, A Talk in the Park</i>
Alan Bennett	<i>Talking Heads</i>
Cherie Bennett	<i>Reviving Ophelia</i>
Simon Bent	<i>Shelter</i>
Wade Bradford	<i>Tomorrow's Wish</i>
Ann Cartwright	<i>When</i>
Anton Chekhov	<i>The Cherry Orchard</i>
David Farr	<i>The Queen Must Die</i>
Edna Ferber	<i>Sun Dried</i>
Henrik Ibsen	<i>A Doll's House</i>
M L Kingston	<i>Confessions of a Soap Star</i>
Arthur Miller	<i>Death of a Salesman</i>
Anthony Minghella	<i>Cigarettes and Chocolate</i>
Kellie Powell	<i>And Turning, Stay</i>
Peter Shaffer	<i>The Public Eye</i>
William Shakespeare	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream, Antony and Cleopatra, Much Ado About Nothing, Romeo and Juliet, The Merchant of Venice</i>
Neil Simon	<i>Brighton Beach Memoirs</i>
Sophocles	<i>Antigone</i>
Timberlake Wertenbaker	<i>Our Country's Good</i>
Arnold Wesker	<i>Chips with Everything</i>
Tennessee Williams	<i>Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, The Glass Menagerie</i>
Pen Wilson	<i>Cold-Blooded Murderer</i>
David Wood	<i>The See-Saw Tree</i>

Group pieces

Alan Ayckbourn	<i>Mother Figure</i>
John Godber	<i>Shakers</i>
Lorraine Hansberry	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>
Stephen Jeffreys	<i>The Libertine</i>
Federico García Lorca	<i>Blood Wedding</i>
Charlotte Keatley	<i>My Mother Said I Never Should</i>
Christopher Marlowe	<i>Doctor Faustus</i>
Harold Pinter	<i>The Applicant</i>
J B Priestley	<i>An Inspector Calls</i>
Willy Russell	<i>Blood Brothers</i>
William Shakespeare	<i>Macbeth</i>
Tom Stoppard	<i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead</i>
Don Taylor	<i>The Roses of Eyam</i>
Sue Townsend	<i>Womberang</i>
William Wycherley	<i>The Country Wife</i>
Oscar Wilde	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>