

DRAMA

Paper 0411/11
Written Examination

Key messages

In **Section A**, some candidates have a tendency to write too much, given that the marks available in this section are significantly fewer than in **sections B** and **C**.

Candidates should read the questions carefully to ensure that they are providing all that is required of a question. This is particularly pertinent in questions where appropriate understanding and application of technical language are required.

There is an expectation that candidates will be familiar with the dramatic and technical terms in current use. Centres are reminded that an extensive glossary is available to assist in the identification of key terms. Furthermore Centres are reminded that the written examination seeks through discussion to isolate and identify PRACTICAL application in drama. Literary or analytical approaches are to be avoided and candidate responses which focus on narrative or character *per se* without exploring the practical application of dramatic skills and techniques cannot access the higher mark bands.

Technical and design questions demand an approach which is both informed and able to discuss the application of technical method to the dramatic intention. Centres which have not taught the basic specific understanding of any given technical or design skill should advise their candidates to steer clear of questions which may require an understanding of these areas.

General comments

A number of centres had clearly investigated the context of *Talk of the City* and many candidates displayed a perceptive understanding of the piece, especially in relation to plot, characters and their interactions within the political and social circumstances of the drama. It is encouraging that there seems to be 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 continues to improve although there are still some key terms which appear to be causing confusion.

The devised pieces have shown a more adventurous approach with candidates attempting to communicate quite sophisticated messages in interesting ways. Centres seem to be aware that unimaginative approaches to devising tend to lead to weak responses to questions based on the stimuli and this session has seen a number of effective responses, many of which seek to investigate social issues of significance.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Questions 1 – 6 *Talk of the City*

Question 1

Most candidates were able to score full marks here recognising a point where a valid prop is introduced. Most opted for the television camera mentioned in the stage directions whereas a few were more adventurous and suggested uses for notes, sticks, brooms etc. all of which appeared in Scene 2. However, a significant number scored only one mark because they did not provide adequate justification of effectiveness in that they simply referred to its significance as a presence rather than suggesting how it might be used effectively.

Question 2

Though this question was approached with confidence in the majority of cases there were a significantly high number of instances where candidates clearly did not understand the term 'pace'. A majority of answers discussed possible aspects of MILLY DEWS's vocal delivery including volume, tone, pitch and even timbre. Some responses referred to characteristics such as happiness, excitement and enthusiasm but very few even mentioned pace which is what the question specifically requires. Regrettably, many candidates scored no marks on this question.

Question 3

There were two approaches common to this question. A number of candidates produced a character analysis showing the commonalities and dissimilarities between the two characters of CLIVE and ROBBIE. This scored no marks. Others recognised that practical application was required but unless they gave specific examples of what actors could actually do to illustrate the possible relationship and what this demonstrated they could not achieve full marks.

Question 4

This question was generally well answered with many candidates scoring full marks. Most could identify two of ARNOS's characteristics and say how they would bring them out. The characteristics chosen had to be clearly defined however and where only a vague sense of intention or inclination was given marks could not be awarded.

Question 5

Again there was a good range of effective responses with many candidates perceiving how the character of HONKER might control his vocal delivery. The most insightful responses were able to cite elements of volume, tone, pitch, breathing and energy. Most candidates were able to score at least two marks on this question.

Question 6

Responses mostly recognised the hints from the text about ISABEL's individualism. Her appearance, dress and demeanour were all recognisable in the answers. More able candidates were able to expand upon this within the context of her feelings for CLIVE and her enjoyment of teasing ROBBIE. The best answers included reference to the potential for the character's physicality and vocal qualities.

Questions 7 – 8 *Devised work*

Question 7

All candidates were able to identify a character but a number were unclear about how the character helped to move the action along. A number of candidates restricted their answers to a narrative description of the events of the piece, with occasional references to their character. Stronger responses were able to point to actions or moments where the character said or did something which impacted upon the plot. It is not sufficient to say that the character was central to the plot, however, because this does not necessarily indicate how they moved the plot along. Successful answers had to explain what the character actually did to make a difference to the energy, atmosphere, pace, tension etc. which in turn impacted upon the action.

Question 8

Many responses showed that candidates were less than secure when it comes to discussing the specific application of gesture. A very high proportion of responses talked about gesture in the generic sense without actually saying what the gesture was e.g. 'We used lots of angry gestures in this scene to show how the crowd felt...' The question calls for a discussion of specific application such as 'shaking fists' or even 'wildly staring eyes'. Where gesture was considered generically marks were not awarded. Even further from the intention of the question were those candidates who considered gesture in abstract ways such as a political gesture for example. This type of answer too did not score any marks.

Section B

Questions 9 – 11 *Talk of the City*

Question 9

A few candidates were able to suggest an imaginative, comprehensive and detailed sound design. This included a consideration of the many options presented by the broadcasting studio environment and the creation of atmosphere both indoors and externally, with particular emphasis placed on the opportunities for sound effects to create the busy station environment. More frequent and less confident responses focused more on music and in some cases this was their exclusive concern, reflecting on the style, period and genre of the music, its volume and its fading up and down and thereby narrowing the context of the question. Such answers were unable to access beyond the middle band of the assessment criteria.

Question 10

This question was in the main answered well. Candidates seemed to understand the role of BERNARD. Many wrote at length on the way his character might manifest his transition from one environment to another. They were able to identify and explain his strengths and vulnerabilities and discuss them in great detail. Here of course lies the danger, since over-analytical responses do not always perceive the need to apply a practical process to the discussion and clearly explain what the actor might do to demonstrate the product of this analysis. The best answers managed to maintain a sound balance between in-depth analysis (understanding) and practical, communicative demonstration (application).

Question 11

A significant number of candidates responded well to this question focussing mostly on the contrast between the reality of the outside world and the forebodings of war and the privileged, hermetically sealed environment of the broadcasting studio. The most successful answers concentrated on characterisation, relationships and the creation of atmosphere in which the suppressed tension might be released. Other responses tended to focus on set, lighting and costume and in doing so ran the risk of becoming fixated on technical and design disciplines rather than directorial ones thereby not scoring so highly.

Section C

Questions 12 – 14

Stimuli

Of the three stimuli the photograph proved the most popular, closely followed by both the poem and the quotation.

Question 12

Regardless of which stimulus was chosen this question caused problems for candidates, a worryingly large proportion of whom ignored the question's insistence on vocal projection and articulation and went off to discuss all manner of challenges and problems faced by the cast including space, energy, set, lighting and even absenteeism. It is unclear why this question was so commonly misinterpreted. Few candidates who opted for this question scored highly but those that did included challenges such as ambient noise in open air performances, poor acoustics in venues and the delivery of choral speech and songs.

Question 13

This question appeared to be enthusiastically welcomed by those that chose it. One or two responses really maximised the opportunities provided by a well-equipped theatre and there were some imaginative and workable set designs. Sadly, with all these opportunities for implementing an original and effective set many candidates focused on lighting and for many the lighting design became the set design. Though this in itself is not unheard of in the professional context it is a shame that candidates did not take their opportunities to consider options for practical set design applications. Wherever clearly explained valid suggestions were made they were credited, however.

Question 14

All responses were able to cite a central message, even if only a very elemental or simple one, that they wished to communicate through the piece. Some went on to describe this message in great detail and in doing so ran a risk of producing lengthy narrative. Clarity of understanding of the intended message was sufficient for many to score marks in the upper part of the middle band of the assessment criteria but for a response to score highly in the upper band there needs to be a significant level of evaluation. This means that it is not sufficient for a candidate to write that a specified action or technique 'shows' something. The requirement is for them to go further and say why it showed the thing discussed and how effectively it did so. Real evaluation is challenging for some candidates and this question was answered well by a relatively small number.

DRAMA

<p>Paper 0411/12 Written Examination</p>
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Key messages

- Some candidates continue to ignore the allocation of marks; often writing more for a 2 mark question than for one of the essay questions in Sections B or C that carry 25 marks.
- The improvement in responses based upon the devised work continues and there is greater evidence of the work actually being performed.
- Two of the questions in Section C required candidates to evaluate their work; this was generally superficial and lacked reflection on how the actual performance had realised what was intended.
- A number of candidates attempted the design question in Section B who were evidently not prepared for such a question and would have been better served by attempting another question.
- Whilst Centres are evidently using the glossary provided in their teaching more, some of the technical language used presented some challenges most notably 'pace' and 'physicality'.
- In essay questions, the mark scheme is incremental, with the middle and upper bands moving from understanding or process into application or evaluation. To gain access to the upper band, candidates must first meet the criteria for the middle band. In other words, there must be understanding AND application or process AND evaluation.

General comments

Many candidates evidenced 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 tying specific comments about aspects of performance to particular points in the text/performance. 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 evidence of relevant, appropriate 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 went to considerable lengths to justify their work in terms of how it responded to the chosen stimulus; this is not a requirement and takes up valuable time. However candidates do need to be explicit in the points that are made so as to make their intentions clear to an examiner who has not seen the performance. While examiners do not want lengthy narratives about the pieces, candidates should be aware of the need to provide sufficient relevant detail to enable a person who has not seen the performance to understand the points they are trying to make.

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 improve 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 the higher levels in the mark schemes.

Many candidates wrote their answers in far too much detail, often completely ignoring the allocation of marks. There was also a tendency to supply more than the number of points specified in the question, for example in questions 3 and 4. There was a particular trend seen this year in the number of responses that did not focus on the question that was actually asked. Candidates sometimes provided quite sophisticated responses that were mostly irrelevant and therefore could not be credited.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

There were numerous props cited in the text and, therefore, candidates were expected to use this information. A few candidates listed items that are classed as 'set' which could not be credited. Most cited an appropriate prop, but a few responses were too vague about its use to gain the second mark.

Question 2

Many candidates did not understand the term 'pace' and therefore gained no marks. Those candidates who showed understanding of the technical language were able to use the text well in supporting their answer.

Question 3

Candidates needed to show that they understood the relationship between Rex and Leonard, that is that Rex is a junior member of staff at the radio station and Leonard is keen for him to know his place in the organisation. There are a number of encounters between the two characters through which Leonard clearly puts Rex in his place. This question caused some problems for candidates. Many wrote at great length but said very little that could be credited. There were lots of suggestions about how the relationship could be shown which did not specify the aspect of relationship that was being illustrated. A number suggested three or more different ways of showing the same aspect of relationship, often by citing vocal elements, gesture, facial expressions etc. Such a mechanistic approach to using the elements of drama in their responses provided weaker responses.

Question 4

This also caused some problems. Many failed to identify two valid character traits. Indeed in many cases it was evident that candidates did not really understand John and some ignored the information that was given in the pre-release material. There was a tendency to isolate aspects of John's actions or reactions in the specified extract and present them as character traits. Once candidates had gained the first mark for a valid aspect of character, they were usually able to go on to say how it could be brought out in performance, thus gaining the second mark also.

Question 5

Controlling delivery was somewhat loosely interpreted and so most candidates made some valid points about vocal elements related to the speech in question and gained two marks. A fair number had some notion of context and gave specific examples but very few were able to present responses that displayed a clear understanding of how to control the vocal delivery and the way in which different lines might be approached.

Question 6

This elicited a similar response to the previous question, with most gaining at least two marks and many three because of an implicit understanding of context and a good number of suggestions for delivery directly related to particular points in the extract. A high proportion of candidates did not really understand the context of this speech which is an integral part of accessing the full range of marks available.

Question 7

The response here was very varied, with many choosing an aspect that related to their overall dramatic intention for the piece, which made it harder for them to specify particular examples of what they did to make the aspect memorable for the audience. Therefore, many relied on general or quite vague comments and a significant proportion of candidates simply recounted the plot of their piece, without further reference to making it memorable for the audience. Candidates who chose to focus on a particular dramatic moment in the piece tended to reach the higher levels in the mark scheme.

Question 8

This question provided challenges for many candidates, some of whom lost sight of the question and drifted into general discussions of proxemics or simply repeated their narration of the plot of their piece. Some never got to grips with the idea of varying the physical distance between performers, even though they may have had some interesting things to say about their use of space. As always, there were a number of candidates who really focused on the question and who had obviously worked with creativity and flair on the creation of their piece, so that they were able to supply a clear and, in some cases, proficient response.

Section B

Question 9

This was not a very popular question and, in many cases, those who attempted it did not have sufficient technical knowledge to access the full mark range. Most candidates were able to make a limited range of valid suggestions about the use of sound in a production of the piece, linking their suggestions to fairly general aspects of the extract; their ideas were frequently centred on the use of music either to help set the scene or create atmosphere. Only a few were able to apply sound design at specific key points in the extract, with the better candidates explaining their decisions in terms of meeting the intentions of the piece and enhancing the audience's experience. Many did not really attempt to explore the practical potential of the play's focus on the medium of radio and only a few acknowledged the opportunities for sound design provided by other aspects of the piece, for example in the supermarket scene. A small number wrote with some authority on technical matters, which would only gain credit if the response also met the assessment criteria in terms of demonstrating practical understanding with references to the extract.

Question 10

This was the most popular question in Section B and candidates generally showed a good understanding. Susan's appearances in the piece were relatively limited but most were able to pick out at least a few valid character traits, although some of the weaker candidates' responses contained rather contradictory statements without any attempt at justification. Contradictions were most evident when candidates worked through the extract, picking out points about character and making suggestions for performance as they went along, although some of the stronger characters adopted this approach with success. Another approach was to deal with a range of character traits in turn; again the better candidates were able to link quite developed understanding of character, clearly evidenced from the text, with a variety of practical suggestions for performance approaches expressed in terms of what the actor would actually do in order to communicate effectively with the audience. Perhaps the most difficult approach for candidates to manage effectively was when they worked from aspects of performance, such as voice, gesture, costume or make-up, and then sought to apply relevant approaches to character performance, with or without relevant references to the extract; this tended to result in responses that did not merit a mark in the Upper Band in spite of evidence of clear application because the understanding of character was not demonstrated.

Question 11

This was another popular choice although only a few candidates were able to show really developed understanding of the theme of frustrated ambition throughout the play. However, most candidates showed some understanding of the director's role, although one or two concentrated on that to the exclusion of any detailed consideration of the extract. Although many were able to cite examples of ambition or frustration, overall understanding of the theme was seldom evident. Some, who considered the piece in terms of performance, tended to explore a range of aspects, including technical matters such as set, costumes, props, sound and lighting, although many did not manage to keep their ideas relevant to the director's role in bringing out the theme in a performance. Again, many candidates managed either some understanding or some application, but few succeeded in combining the two. It was common for candidates to give a general introduction that clearly evidenced understanding of the question, but then to offer random practical suggestions as to how they might bring various aspects of particular scenes out in performance without linking them to the theme identified in the question.

Section C

Question 12

This was a very popular question which, generally, was quite well done. Most managed at least a response that provided some detail of who wore what and why. While it is very appropriate to use costume to enhance the drama by helping to set a piece in time and place and to communicate information to the audience about character, status, relationship etc., many eschewed such practical and workable approaches in favour of highly dubious symbolic aspiration, often based on a fanciful notion of colour-coding that would be completely lost on the audience. That is not to suggest that colour is unimportant in costume design, because clearly it is, but candidates must make their justifications clear and include sufficient detail that will demonstrate exactly how their designs will communicate their intentions to the audience. There was a tendency to make only general references to the devised piece, although there were some very impressive responses, in which candidates discussed exactly how the actors used their costumes to assist them in communicating with the audience in very specific ways and at clearly identified points in the piece.

Question 13

This question was probably almost as popular as question 12 and provoked a wide range of responses. Most were able to show some understanding of character relationships within the piece, although some attempted to subvert the question and explored the relationship between actors and their audience, which had a part to play in evaluation but was not what the question was about. This question sometimes elicited a narrative or, at best, descriptive response from weaker candidates. Sadly, this sometimes happened where the devised pieces were rather more imaginative in dramatic style and techniques, as they did not always have clearly defined characters but adopted more of an ensemble approach. However, in these cases the better candidates were still able to access the higher levels in the mark scheme by exploring the interaction between actors across the range of roles they played in the piece and evaluating them in terms of realisation of intention and impact on audience. It was interesting to see character development techniques, such as hot-seating and role on the wall, being utilised in the process of character development, but candidates sometimes forgot that the primary focus of this question was the evaluation of their success in creating character relationships in performance for an audience, which might include, but should not end with, the techniques used to build individual characters during the preparation process.

Question 14

This was not quite as popular as the other two questions. Unfortunately, some candidates did not understand the term physicality at all and wrote about everything except how the actors used their bodies in performance. Many of the others simply regurgitated the material they had used in answer to question 8. However, there were a number of excellent responses, which explored and evaluated their use of physicality in a variety of pieces of devised work. Some adopted a nuanced and sensitive approach to physicality in essentially naturalistic or realistic pieces, while others fully exploited the potential for communicating their dramatic intentions through the use of highly inventive, energetic, disciplined and effective examples of physical theatre techniques.

DRAMA

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. Equally, they should not use their time providing information that is not asked for in the question.
- Literary approaches to answering questions must be avoided. 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.
- In **Section A**, candidates should observe the number of marks available for each question. Lengthy responses for 2 to 5 mark questions are not necessary and will result in less time to respond to the essay questions in **Sections B** and **C** which are worth 25 marks. Two sentences to answer a 2-mark question and up to seven sentences to answer a 5-mark question should be regarded as a limit. The best responses are those that are well-considered and expressed succinctly – often in fewer sentences than the limit here indicated.
- Candidates need to consider carefully their choice of question in **Sections B** and **C**. For example, Centres which have not taught the basic technical or design skills, such as sound 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 piece, from conception through the developmental process and to performance. 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. Purely narrative responses attract very few marks.
- Candidates who have engaged practically with their devised pieces to performance standard tend to show greater confidence with the questions in **Section C**.
- Candidates should be familiar with the dramatic and technical terms in current use. An extensive (but not exhaustive) glossary is provided in the syllabus to assist in the identification of key terms.

General comments

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.

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 *American Days* 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, and there was evidence that some candidates lacked an understanding of key dramatic ideas. As always, 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 was a marked improvement in the way candidates approached the discussion of technical issues and less evidence of inadequate understanding of costume, lighting, sound and set design in the theatre, all playing their part in the communication of dramatic meaning through sign and symbol. Yet 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.

In a few cases the quality of candidates' handwriting gave cause for concern and Centres are requested to encourage their candidates to write legibly. Candidates whose work is illegible are self-penalising, since credit cannot be awarded for ideas that cannot be deciphered.

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 reminded to advise candidates about this aspect of the rubric before they sit the examination.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: 1–5

Question 1

Most were able to access this question and score full marks. There were one or two instances of candidates identifying props that were not mentioned in the text but the props were appropriate and creatively used – the mark scheme, however, did not allow for this. Some took imagery from the dialogue such as the tapes and whilst identification could be credited, effective use was unlikely to be. There were a number of candidates who identified the fridge as a prop and then went on to describe its function as a piece of set.

Question 2

Many candidates mistook pacing for delivery giving suggestions for intonation, or pitch/ volume with a small number confusing pace of delivery with pacing around the room. There were several over long answers, possibly due to the change of attitude demonstrated by the character, but despite this, only one piece of advice was required. There were, however, a lot of good responses identifying moments in the extract where pace of delivery would naturally change and why.

Question 3

This proved to be quite a difficult question for some. A large number of candidates mistakenly talked about proxemics or SHERMAN's facial expression towards IAN when, in fact, SHERMAN was in a different part of the building and on the other end of the phone therefore not on stage at all. Many candidates were able to provide evidence of the relationship between the characters but did not provide examples of how to show this in performance, and thus could not be credited.

Question 4

This was one of the most successful Section A questions as most candidates had a sound grasp of SHERMAN's character and were able to identify two character traits with answers that demonstrated understanding of how to show these in performance. Candidates with the best responses made valid suggestions about the character and then succinctly gave advice for portrayal in a couple of sentences. Others, perhaps keen to demonstrate their understanding of the character gave lengthy responses that could not receive additional credit. (Please see 'key messages' above.)

Question 5

Most candidates understood this question and seemed to grasp fully the purpose of GARY's monologue. There were, however, several candidates who neglected to make actual explicit reference to specific lines. Most candidates focused on pace (slow/fast) with some including pause and stuttering. Better answers were able to connect specific moments in the text to changes in GARY's perceptions and attitude as the monologue progressed. There were also those who dominated their response with directions on movement and physical gesture which could not be credited.

Question 6

There were generally good answers to this question. Candidates demonstrated understanding of opportunities for physicality and expression in order to give an impression of LORRAINE's character to the audience. Most were able to identify her as a shy, timid character, but some felt she was a little more devious than first thought – whilst this is an interesting take on the character, there is little if anything to suggest it in the extract. The best responses did pick up from the text that there were occasions where she needed to be portrayed as 'standing up' to SHERMAN.

7–8 Devised Work

Question 7

This was a very successful question with the majority of candidates being able to identify the most dramatic moment within their piece and therefore earn at least one mark. There were some excellent answers with some good levels of detail as to what the moment was and why it had greatest impact. Some candidates were unable to be specific in their identification of the 'moment' and discussed whole scenes, but most were able to justify their choice in relation to dramatic effectiveness.

Question 8

There were many good answers with candidates understanding scene changes and the technical/performance means by which they achieved outcomes. In better responses, candidates were able to discuss not only the scene changes, but also the transition of mood/atmosphere/tension and release with some excellent examples of critical evaluation. However, several candidates simply listed the blackouts and movement of furniture rather than analysing how they were managed. Some candidates simply wrote that they had no scene changes and therefore nothing to write about.

Section B: 9–11 American Days

Question 9

This was the least popular of the three questions in this section. The best responses showed understanding of how sound can be used in a largely naturalistic piece to support location and enhance drama with sophisticated discussion of external sounds being heard and varied according to, say, the opening and closing of the door. Suggested use of *leitmotif* for each character with description of instruments and their

timbre showed clear understanding of the text but not of the play's style. Others discussed a range of sounds and effects but these were not always fully developed, whilst a few wrote a paragraph or two about sound design and then went on to explore set, costume and make-up.

Question 10

This was the most popular choice with some excellent answers. The responses all seemed to have a good grasp of the character of TALLULAH and were able to make some excellent references to specific lines and how they should be delivered. Some understood the significance of the role in relation to other characters and could provide examples of her effect upon them and her changing attitudes according to her own confidence levels. Some, whilst showing good understanding of the character, did not give any textual evidence when making suggestions about how the character could be portrayed and thus could not be awarded marks in the higher bands. A small number focused unduly upon considerations of costume which could only be fully credited when linked with communication of character.

Question 11

This response tended to be from candidates who were able to attain higher mark levels and, on the whole, showed some excellent creativity. There were some real attempts made to lift the extract from the page with a clear sense of directorial vision. Whilst there were some otherwise sophisticated answers, there was sometimes a lack of attention to the second part of the question – bringing out the theme in performance – with the result that able candidates were losing marks by too much discussion of their directorial ideas at the expense of demonstrating too little application in terms of how these ideas would be achieved in performance. Some candidates focused on the whole picture – not only how the actors would perform but also how other aspects of the production, such as set, costume, sound and lighting would contribute to the intended directorial vision. These candidates fared better, as a rule, than those who concentrated on a single element such as character.

Section C: 12–14 Devised work

Question 12

This was the most popular question from Section C and most often combined with question 10. There were some excellent responses to this question that showed a real understanding of the development of the devised work from initial idea to final performance. There was a pleasing amount of theoretical understanding and ability to identify the influence of existing practitioners on the final work and the devising process. The best responses often followed a point, example and explain/evaluate structure with others tending to provide too much narrative content. In order to access the higher band marks, candidates needed to be able to relate explanation of the content to its development from an original idea.

Question 13

This question was also a popular choice – the idea of contrasts seemed to be a fundamental consideration in much of the devised work and it was clear that many candidates had a sound understanding of the intention of their piece and how contrasts were used to meet this intent. Most answers contrasted roles, their purposes and attitudes and costume; some included contrasting themes and others provided details relating to other technical aspects such as set, lighting and sound. Whilst these discussions could be impressive on their own, in order to attain higher marks, candidates needed to provide detailed evaluation of the outcomes of the use of contrasts, particularly in a performance context.

Question 14

This was the least popular choice in this section. Character analysis was variable with the best answers describing several traits of the character and how these were revealed through the development of the action and made explicit to the audience through acting skills and the relationships with other characters. Several pieces had stylized use of roles as opposed to developed characters and these answers tended to be less successful at showing how personality was dramatised.

DRAMA

Paper 0411/02
Coursework

General comments

The session ran smoothly in terms of administration, with most Centres being very well organised for submission dates. There was a good level of accuracy in the completion of the paperwork, and Moderators reported very few errors of addition or transcription. The two most common problems were a) where Centres did not include the ICMS forms for all of the candidates, or b) the opposite, where all the work and the forms were included, but the Centre did not identify a moderation sample. The ICMS forms for **all** candidates must be sent to Cambridge, and the Centre should draw from this total a sample of six candidates whose performance work should be sent. This sample should include the highest- and lowest-marked candidate, with an even spread across the remaining candidates.

The quality and relevance of the comments provided on the ICMS forms was variable. Most Centres provided fulsome, helpful remarks that indicated precisely where credit had been awarded, although a minority provided hardly any comments at all, and others merely quoted what was in the assessment criteria. Moderators emphasised the importance of explaining how and why a particular mark was arrived at, drawing on the criteria for assessment and making clear what the candidate had done to warrant the mark awarded.

Nearly all candidates stated their name/number at the beginning of the recording, dressed exactly as they would then appear in the performance. It would also be helpful in addition if Centres could reinforce this on the ICMS forms with an accurate description of what candidates were wearing and a physical description (hair, glasses, relative height, etc.).

Recordings of performances

The overall quality of the DVDs was better than in previous sessions, and many Centres chaptered their discs, which was very helpful. Some Centres did not use a static camera, which meant that candidates were not always seen in full. There were relatively few technical problems with the recordings themselves, however: a few DVDs had been damaged in transit, and there were also some MP4 format DVDs that did not play on an Apple Mac. A number of recordings suffered from high levels of extraneous noise, which was sometimes distracting to the performers.

Text-based performances

Moderators reported that the standard of work seen was generally consistent with that submitted in previous sessions, although there appeared to be greater accuracy in the application of the assessment criteria this session.

Monologues

This was generally a very strong aspect of the work of most candidates, where they were in complete charge of the success of the performance. Most candidates were able to showcase acting skills that were honed and refined through a specific text, and there was strong evidence of effective rehearsal with very few memory lapses and some excellent articulation and enunciation. A number of candidates struggled with spoken English and gave performances that were very far from being ready for an audience to view.

It was evident that most candidates had considerable empathy with the role they were acting.

The strongest candidates presented their pieces with conviction, conveying their character and context to their audience with a real sense that they understood how to create effective performance. They delivered their lines in a very confident manner and interpreted the performance text in a mature and sophisticated

way. Excellent phrasing and timing, coupled with a strong stage presence and keen awareness of audience, was apparent in many Centres.

There were fewer static performances than in previous sessions, although some Centres provided all candidates with a desk, chair and phone for their monologues. This encouraged a one-size-fits-all approach, which was not helpful to any of the candidates in the Centre since it restricted their approach to gesture and physicality.

Many Centres offered a wide variety of texts, calling for different styles and techniques. It was pleasing to see candidates extending their knowledge and understanding of theatre across different historical periods and styles. Although not compulsory, some Centres paid careful attention to set and costume where period drama was tackled. This was commendable and helped candidates get into character and develop stylistically. Some candidates, however, did not seem particularly aware of the style of the play from which their monologue was taken. It was not always evident that candidates had researched the whole play and, on occasion, monologues were presented out of context.

Group-text

The quality of group repertoire pieces was generally good.

Moderators reported seeing some outstanding performance work, which was both dynamic and engaging. The majority of candidates understood the need for a strong performance focus and where there was a real sense of theatrical discipline, the work was powerful and impactful. It was pleasing that many candidates performed to a live audience.

Candidates who performed in appropriate performance spaces to live audiences were much more successful in performance. This added a sense of occasion and raised the level of the candidates' performance skills, which were generally absent in classroom or corridor settings.

It was pleasing that there were few examples of scripts on stage this session.

The choice of text was the most significant factor in determining the success of the pieces and the strongest candidates performed challenging texts with confidence and commitment. Some of the contemporary pieces and the more culturally relevant texts were very successful, although traditional playwrights such as Oscar Wilde also continued to be popular. Some groups were let down by limitations in the texts that were given them. A few Centres showed an inappropriate reliance on the work of D M Larson, whose plays – although readily available on the Internet – are largely intended for classroom performance rather than the stage.

Devised performances

Moderators reported that, although there were some effective pieces, many candidates' devised work was less strong than their repertoire performances.

The strongest work reflected an understanding of a range of dramatic techniques and approaches. These pieces took risks with ideas, characters and situations, often using physicality, mime, music and non-narrative structures to create exciting and innovative work. Some non-naturalistic pieces were powerful and effective, and there were examples of some excellent physical work inspired by DV8, Frantic Assembly and a range of experimental practitioners. There was also some very effective politically inspired work, which at its best showed sensitive awareness of issues in the history of individual countries. It was also pleasing to see mature responses to political and ecological issues, avoiding the more obvious teenage angst.

Many devised pieces were, however, predictable or clichéd, often lacking in physicality or development of characters beyond the stereotypical. Many candidates attempted to explore topics that were often unsuitable for them, as they lacked sufficient understanding of the issues. As a result, the level of performance skills was often lower because the dramatic material itself was not especially challenging, and candidates needed to think more creatively as to what they could do to showcase their acting skills.

Assessment Objective 2 was frequently over-marked by Centres as credit was awarded for effort rather than outcome. Comments on the ICMS forms indicated that marks had been awarded because candidates had impressed their teachers because of their high level of motivation and/or attitude rather than ability to create, shape and refine dramatic content. This accounted for many of the adjustments in marks.

Frequently-used plays for repertoire performances

Alan Ayckbourn	<i>Absent Friends</i> <i>Confusions</i> <i>Invisible Friends</i> <i>The Norman Conquests</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>
Anton Chekhov	<i>The Seagull</i>
Caryl Churchill	<i>Top Girls</i>
Shelagh Delaney	<i>A Taste of Honey</i>
Denise Deegan	<i>Daisy Pulls It Off</i>
Euripides	<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>Teachers</i>
Nicolai Gogol	<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>
Sarah Kane	<i>4:48 Psychosis</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>
Mary O'Malley	<i>Once a Catholic</i>
Arthur Miller	<i>All My Sons</i> <i>Death of a Salesman</i> <i>The Crucible</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>
Dennis Potter	<i>Blue Remembered Hills</i>
J B Priestley	<i>An Inspector Calls</i>
Mark Ravenhill	<i>Pool (no water)</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 Ceasar</i> <i>King Lear</i> <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> <i>Twelfth Night</i>
Neil Simon	<i>Plaza Suite</i> <i>The Odd Couple</i>
Sophocles	<i>Antigone</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>
Mark Wheeler	<i>Too Much Punch for Judy</i>