

2022 NCEA Assessment Report

Subject: Drama

Level: 2

Standards: 91215, 91219

Part A: Commentary

As in previous years, candidates who read, understood and responded to the entire question, rather than answering individual bullet points in isolation, provided stronger answers. Bullet points were a guide to the selection of relevant information and were designed to support scaffolding of a comprehensive answer, but were not to be treated as the question.

At Level 2, candidates should have a sound understanding of the terms ‘elements’, ‘techniques’, ‘conventions’, and ‘technologies’. Familiarity with drama terminology needed to be secure enough to ensure that responses were accurate. A confident grasp of drama terminology saw candidates reach higher levels of achievement through accurate, well-composed answers.

Candidates were also expected to show an understanding of a theatre form (91215) or a live performance (91219), using detailed evidence from either a text (91215) or performance (91219). To do so successfully, candidates needed an accurate and in-depth knowledge of the text or performance. Candidates who demonstrated in-depth knowledge using detailed evidence were rewarded with higher levels of achievement.

Part B: Report on standards

91215: Discuss a drama or theatre form or period with reference to a text

Examination

The examination included three questions, and candidates were required to respond to all three. Each question had two parts, with a response required for both. Question One required candidates to apply their understanding of a typical performance feature and the effect of the use of this. Question Two required candidates to apply their understanding of typical performance space and purpose of the text. Question Three required candidates to apply their understanding of a typical moment and key intention of the form or period. All three questions required candidates to apply their understanding of the theatre form or period with reference to a text, from which they were to provide detailed evidence.

Observations

Candidates who demonstrated clear understanding of the different types of features of drama forms or periods were most successful. Despite being provided a definition that articulated performance features are those “used in a performance for an audience”, a number of candidates still found it difficult to correctly identify a performance feature for

their form or period; instead, they opted to write about historical context, ideas, and themes, without reference to a performance feature. Some candidates who gave incorrect performance features were able to demonstrate clear knowledge of their form or period, but could not be rewarded for this. It was essential that candidates had a clear and confident understanding of the vocabulary that is used within the achievement standard and examination.

Candidates who wrote about texts that sit outside of the historical/social context of the form or period were often limited in their answers, as they were unable to articulate an accurate understanding of the traditional historical/social context. For example, in writing about a feminist or political play as being an example of epic theatre, candidates were struggling to successfully articulate understanding of the traditions of the chosen theatre form or period, as opposed to their understanding of Brecht and his context.

Candidates should ensure that they are familiar with the social/historical context of the form or period, as well as the social/historical context of their play and the playwright. The most common forms or periods written about successfully were Elizabethan theatre, epic theatre, and Ancient Greek theatre. In all these forms, candidates were rewarded at all levels of achievement. Candidates who wrote about commedia dell'arte, melodrama, American or Victorian realism, and musical theatre typically did not reach Excellence, due to a lack of perceptive understanding of the form or period. To achieve at higher levels, candidates had to be able to insightfully connect their discussions of features to the greater purpose of the text and the form.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- referred to a text relevant to the drama or theatre form or period
- attempted only part (a) of each question or produced generalised responses, with limited reference to evidence that was not detailed enough for Merit
- produced responses that showed little connection between their explanations in part (a) and part (b)
- demonstrated understanding of a typical performance feature for Question One, but could not show adequate understanding of the effect of use
- demonstrated understanding of the purpose of the text for Question Two, but could not discuss how the performance space helped reveal this
- demonstrated understanding of a key moment for Question Three, but could not make connections to the intention of the form.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- produced generic responses about the drama or theatre form or period without any reference to, or providing any evidence from, a text – often in the case of commedia dell'arte
- produced responses that referred to more than one text, and as a result, responses lacked specificity

- interpreted the questions posed incorrectly, produced responses that were incomplete, or failed to answer one or more of the questions
- produced responses that did not accurately identify a performance feature for Question One
- produced responses that did not make clear connections between typical performance space and the text for Question Two.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- produced responses that showed clear knowledge of the drama or theatre form or period and their chosen text, and responded to both parts of the question in some detail
- used the bullet points provided in part (b) to guide their answer, but did not let these dictate their response
- supported their responses with detailed, well-chosen evidence or produced responses that did not yet provide detail regarding the text's purpose, which was required for Excellence
- demonstrated clear understanding of the effect of the chosen feature on an audience of the time for Question One
- demonstrated clear understanding of performance space and connections to social/historical context (class structures, religious beliefs) for Question Two
- showed developing understanding of the context of the form or period – enough to provide further detail in their answers – but did not yet discuss deeper meaning within the text.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- produced original responses that were not rote-learned
- used specific, well-considered evidence to support their responses, providing relevant and meaningful references to the text that were well-chosen to articulate an insightful point
- produced responses that demonstrated insightful understanding of a drama or theatre form or period, and how the text reflected these
- produced responses that articulated perceptive understanding of texts, and therefore the playwright's purpose and the world of the playwright
- demonstrated perceptive understanding of features of the form or period and why they were utilised, and the impact of this on the audience.

91219: Discuss drama elements, techniques, conventions, and technologies within live performance

Examination

The examination included three questions, and candidates were required to respond to all three. Each question had two parts, with candidates being required to respond to both. Question One required candidates to apply their understanding of two contrasting characters from a live performance they had performed in. Question Two required candidates to apply their understanding of a convention in a live performance they had performed in or seen. Question Three required candidates to apply their understanding of technology in a live performance they had seen. All three questions required candidates to apply their understanding of drama elements, techniques, conventions, and technologies within a live performance(s), from which they were to provide detailed evidence.

Observations

Candidates' careful selection of live performances to discuss is essential to their success. With regards to both performances seen or performed in, candidates should be guided to discuss performances that provide opportunities to write about the aspects outlined in the assessment specifications.

Candidates were most successful when writing about selected aspects in a live performance that lent themselves well to the question asked. This demonstrated that they had understood the question and carefully thought about the characters/convention/technology that would best allow them to demonstrate their understanding. Responses where candidates did not isolate an appropriate aspect tended to be plot-driven and did not provide sufficient discussion of elements, techniques, conventions, and technologies.

Candidates who connected their responses across part (a) and part (b) of the questions tended to demonstrate more insightful understanding of drama aspects in the live performance.

Candidates who used the sketch boxes well included quality annotations alongside their sketches, and this supported their responses to be increasingly detailed. However, few candidates used the sketch boxes in this way. Candidates are encouraged to see the value of carefully annotated sketches to support their responses, and are reminded that they are not marked on artistic merit.

When writing about conventions, candidates were mostly able to describe how they were used and show some perception as to why they were used. However, discussions of a single freeze frame were often limiting, and discussions of monologues often led to analysis of the text rather than a focus on the performance itself.

Candidates are required to use accurate, specific drama terminology in their responses in order to achieve this standard. Candidates needed greater vocabulary to discuss sounds and music in effective detail. Those who wrote specifically about instruments used and the

effect found greater success. Issues regarding specificity were also found when candidates wrote about the technology of lighting. Candidates were able to describe the use of lighting generally, for example, 'pink lighting', but showed little consideration for the direction, focus, or intensity of the lighting. Candidates are encouraged to write about chosen technologies in a manner that is specific and detailed.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- answered one question of three successfully, but then did not answer the others as successfully, or at all
- identified and wrote about specific moments in performance, but not always the most appropriate moment
- produced responses that showed some accurate understanding of the terminology used in the questions
- responded to the question in a generic manner
- provided a sketch to support their response, but not with sufficient detail to support achievement at a higher level
- responded loosely to the bullet points in part (b), but did not always sufficiently address the question itself
- offered limited description of techniques used for Question One
- demonstrated limited understanding of the use of convention in performance for Question Two
- offered limited description of the technologies used for Question Three.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- selected simplistic performances that did not allow for adequate discussion of drama aspects
- gave incomplete responses, or failed to answer the questions
- showed only a very rudimentary understanding of the performance and provided little, if any, detail
- focused on the plot of the performance, or wrote very generically about the whole performance rather than focusing on drama elements, techniques, conventions, and technologies used in specific moments
- showed a lack of understanding of terminology – for example, writing about techniques in a response to a question that required a discussion of conventions, or writing about live singing as technology
- provided responses that indicated a limited understanding of the meaning of the performance.

2022 NCEA Assessment Report

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- produced responses that, where directed, were clear and specific about chosen moments
- demonstrated clear and coherent understanding of the aspects of live performances, supported by detailed and relevant evidence
- used drama terminology accurately and in a detailed manner
- provided detailed, annotated sketches to support their answers
- provided responses that showed understanding of important connections between a live performance and the audience
- explained references to wider themes and ideas, purpose, issues, and messages in a confident, detailed, and evidenced manner
- made a careful selection regarding contrasting characters for Question One that gave them scope to write about a wider range of techniques.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- responded fully to all parts of all questions
 - were assured in their understanding of their choice of live performance, and clearly understood the drama aspects within their choice
 - produced responses that demonstrated effective selection of chosen moments to answer the question with perception
 - supported responses with highly appropriate evidence from the performance that linked their knowledge of the performance to their own experiences and/or wider world issues
 - used expertly annotated sketches to support their answers
 - commented on the drama aspects and deeper themes in a way that demonstrated perceptive knowledge of the purpose, the world of the play, and the wider world
 - made perceptive links between live performance and impact on the audience, acknowledging the role of the audience in live performance
 - demonstrated originality in their thinking.
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