

3

91514



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Level 3 Drama, 2016

91514 Interpret a text from a prescribed playwright to demonstrate knowledge of a theatre form or period

9.30 a.m. Friday 2 December 2016
Credits: Four

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Interpret a text from a prescribed playwright to demonstrate knowledge of a theatre form or period.	Interpret a text from a prescribed playwright to demonstrate informed knowledge of a theatre form or period.	Interpret a text from a prescribed playwright to demonstrate perceptive knowledge of a theatre form or period.

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

You should attempt ALL the questions in this booklet.

If you need more room for any answer, use the extra space provided at the back of this booklet.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–16 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.

Excellence

TOTAL

24

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INSTRUCTIONS

Choose ONE text by one of the prescribed playwrights whose work you have studied this year. Use this text to answer ALL of the questions in this booklet.

Read the questions carefully before you begin. Each has different requirements.

PRESCRIBED PLAYWRIGHTS FOR 2016

Jean Anouilh	Federico Garcia Lorca	Jacob Rajan & Justin Lewis
Aristophanes	Briar Grace-Smith	Renee
Samuel Beckett	Gary Henderson	Maurice Shadbolt
Albert Belz	Sarah Kane	William Shakespeare
Jean Betts	Oscar Kightley & Dave Armstrong	George Bernard Shaw
Bertolt Brecht	Hone Kouka	Stephen Sinclair
Lynda Chanwai-Earle	Greg McGee	Sophocles
Anton Chekhov	Bruce Mason	Tom Stoppard
Caryl Churchill	Arthur Miller	Mervyn Thompson
Euripides	Vincent O'Sullivan	Timberlake Wertenbaker
Michelanne Forster	<u>Harold Pinter</u>	Oscar Wilde
Toa Fraser		Tennessee Williams

Write the details of your chosen text in the box below.

Text: <u>The Birthday Party</u> //
Playwright(s): <u>Harold Pinter</u> //
Theatre form or period: <u>Absurdist theatre</u> //

QUESTION ONE: A PERFORMANCE FEATURE OF THE THEATRE FORM/PERIOD

- (a) Describe, in detail, the main message the playwright intended to communicate through your chosen text. You could consider:
- key ideas or themes
 - the playwright's vision or personal statement.

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The main message of Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party* is that we have no control. This message is common in absurdist theatre and outlines that characters have no control over their situation or environment and are subject to their situation instead. Pinter illustrates this clearly as the lives of the characters change dramatically due to an outside force they have no control over. This idea was daily life for Pinter and almost everybody living in post WWII Europe due to the cold war between America and Russia threatening nuclear war and the memory from the London bombings during the war. For Pinter he had no control over international politics yet it threatened his everyday life, it is this feeling of unease that Pinter wrote into "The Birthday Party" as he had no control over his situation.

Identify a typical performance feature of the theatre form or period.

Inherent violence

- (b) Explain how this performance feature is typical of the theatre form or period. Support your answer with appropriate examples.

Inherent violence is the idea that every human has violence inside them, and although we may suppress it given the right environment and situation it will come out of anybody. This is typical of the theatre form as the characters have no control over their inherent violence it can come out regardless of their efforts as they are subject to the situation. This is highlighted by the character Stanley in the play. Stanley begins the play agoraphobic and verbally abusive to Peggy but he isn't physically violent in any way. Until the interrogation scene where Goldberg and McCann aim to "Bring it out of him". In this scene Goldberg controls the situation breaking Stanley with insults and the tense environment, "You're dead, you can't think, you can't love, you're dead. A plague gone wrong, you don't have any juice, you're just an odor". This leaves Stanley a primal shell of his former self violently causing chaos and violently raping the character Lulu. Stanley's violence was inherent and given the right situation he had no control over it, this lack of control is typical to the theatre form and also illustrates that social behaviours are just constructs another common absurdist feature.

Imagine you are the director of a typical performance of the text.

- (c) Discuss how you might use this performance feature to communicate the playwright's main message. Support your answer with appropriate examples and quotation from the text.

If I was to direct the play I would focus heavily on the interrogation scene of Stanley. I would give the character Goldberg complete control of the scene having him standing upright and moving while Stanley sat and was still under a spotlight. I would have the actor playing Goldberg use a large intimidating posture to move and talk with varied paces to control and change the mood of the scene to not only make it clear Stanley is hopeless and without control but to make the audience feel the same as the mood swings violently on them repeatedly. I would then talk to the ~~the~~ actor playing Stanley and I would have him begin the scene making his body small and occupying no personal or general space as if he was trapped, I would then have him imagine that his character slowly and painfully turns into a bear. This is to try have him illustrate the fact that the violence is emerging from within Stanley turning him in to a larger far more violent and animal like character. I ~~would~~ would have the actor do this during the lines "You're dead, you can't think you can't love you're dead. A Plague gone wrong, you don't have any juice you are just an odor." to communicate that it is Goldberg drawing out the violence within Stanley giving Goldberg all of the

QUESTION TWO: THE SOCIAL/HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE THEATRE FORM

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- (a) Describe, in detail, the social/historical context in which your chosen text was written. You could consider:
- the social structure
 - the political environment
 - the influence of events at the time.

~~The~~ *The Birthday Party* is a 1950's play which means that Harold Pinter had lived through WWII and now lived in post war Europe.

The 1950's were a very tense time period as people feared there would be yet another world war as America and Russia fought the cold war, although no shots were fired.

The threat of war was constant. This not only left Pinter and other people in the 1950's in fear but also left them feeling disenchanted

and distrusting of the government due to extensive use of propaganda and the feeling the government had control over their lives which

was strongly to do with the second world war coming directly after the Great War which was said to be the war to end all wars.

The fear of death ~~for~~ from causes outside of his control as well as a distrust for the government were very real feelings for

Pinter as he wrote *The Birthday Party* due to the time period and society that he lived in. //

- (b) Explain how this social/historical context is reflected in the text itself. Support your answer with appropriate examples and quotation from the text.

This has clearly influenced Pinter's writing as the Ever Present Menace is a feature scene throughout the play. The Ever ~~Best~~ Present Menace is the idea that an outside force can come in at any moment and change or destroy your life, it is constantly hanging over ~~that~~ the characters threatening them and completely out of their control. This is seen in multiple moments in the play Stanley begins the play agoraphobic meaning he is terrified of everything outside of new things and people, this fear is fear of the ever present menace and quickly becomes directed towards Goldberg and McCann's arrival. "They are coming with wheelbarrows" Stanley is quoted when told they are coming, this is in reference to the wheelbarrows that were used to collect the dead during the plague. Once Goldberg and McCann arrive it is clear that they are the representation of the ever present ~~men~~ menace "If we hadn't come today we would have come tomorrow" as well as seeming governmental figures wearing suits and looking and acting very officially. Goldberg and McCann become the inevitable outside force that changes the characters lives as they break Stanley instigate chaos which leads to the rape of Lulu. Pinter's distrust of the government and scene of helplessness is clearly illustrated by the presence of Goldberg and McCann.

- (c) Discuss the relevance of the text to today's society. Support your answer with appropriate examples and quotation from the text.

This idea of the ever present menace remains consistent today as we are threatened by Terror attacks, through Isis and their attacks on the USA and Europe, Natural disasters such as the recent earthquakes here in New Zealand and the increasing Military involvement of Russia in wars in the middle east causing tensions between nations. The fear of what we can't control affects everybody as for everybody there is some threat looming overhead. ~~The distrust of government has also remained a relevant feature~~ just as Goldberg and McCann were eventually going to arrive "If we hadn't come today we would have come tomorrow" the threat of what we can't control feels the same. The distrust of government is another feature that has remained relevant as millions of people protest in South Korea calling for their president to step down and in America where Donald Trump was elected for being outside of the government system over Hillary Clinton who has over 40 years of political experience, people felt like the government wasn't taking care of the people and distrusted Clinton because she was a symbol of the government. ~~Gold~~ Goldberg is quoted "You look like



QUESTION THREE: THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN A PERFORMANCE

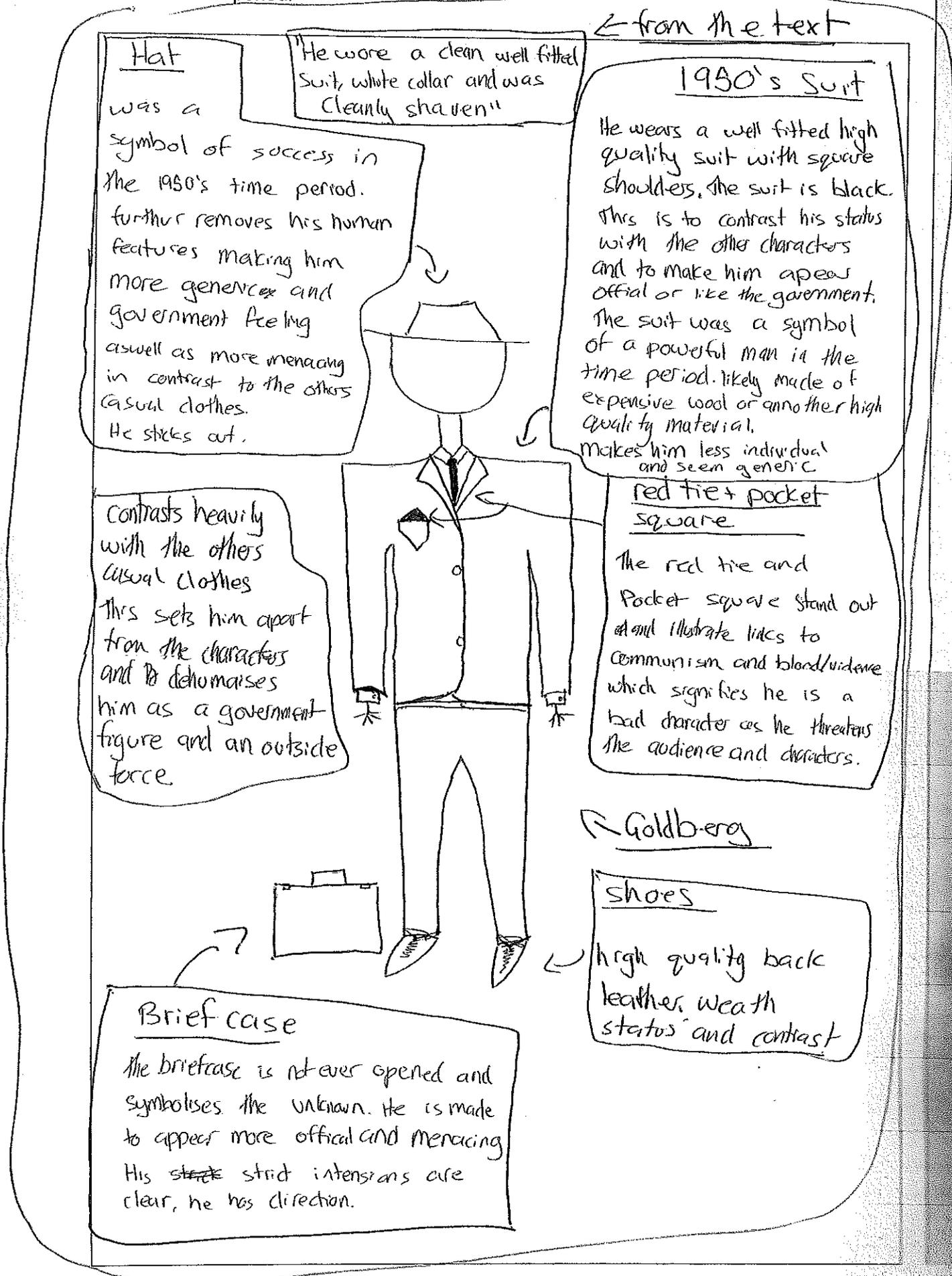
Select (✓) ONE of the following technologies that would be used in a performance of your chosen text:

Costume Set

- (a) Describe, in detail, how this technology would typically have been used in the theatre form or period.

Typically technologies are kept to a minimum in absurdest theatre so that the situation can be related to anytime period or person in an idea called everyman as it is meant to relate to everyman. This means that costume is typically the most used technology in order to ~~distig~~ distinguish characters and highlight their traits. Costumes are typically normal clothes so that they don't ~~so~~ set the character in time or place to heavily and small features are exaggerated to highlight themes and character traits like a suit being dirty or worn down to illustrate deterioration or a hat to symbolise obsession with objects. ~~Things~~ These are very small features but they hold a lot of weight in absurdest theatre.

(b) Make a detailed annotated sketch to show how this technology would have been used in specific ways in a performance of your chosen text, making links between the text and the theatre form or period.



(c) Discuss how the technology could be used to reflect the time and/or place within a typical performance of the text. You could consider:

- colour palette
- materials
- shape
- scale
- style.

Support your answer with appropriate examples and quotation from the text.

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Costume Goldberg highly contrasts the other characters in the scene as he is dressed very formal while they are very casual. He wears a black 1950's suit with large shoulder pads making him appear larger as well as vaguely setting him in the 1950's which is typical to the theatre form as there is only very small hints given so he could really be set in any time period post 1950's. His suit, shoes, hat and other items are all very high quality with wool, or leather or other high quality materials used. This is all done to cement Goldberg as a high status character contrasting the casual clothes of other characters. The suit also removes his individuality which makes him more menacing which when combined with the threatening reel of the pocket square and tie makes Goldberg a symbol for the Ever Present Menace and the government as he appears so official "he wore a clean well fitted suit, white collar and was cleanly shaven". This is typical of the theatre form as it is small features of the costume like his clean generic look and red flashes of colour that indicate what it is Goldberg symbolises.

88

Excellence exemplar 2016

Subject:	Drama	Standard:	91514	Total score:	24
Q	Grade score	Annotation			
1	E8	<p>The candidate describes, in detail, a main message the playwright intended to communicate, and identifies a performance feature, explaining how the feature is typical of the theatre form or period.</p> <p>The discussion of how the performance feature might be used by the director to communicate the playwright’s main message is comprehensive, showing perceptive insight. They make links to the director’s process, and demonstrate a sound understanding of the application of techniques. The discussion makes clear links to the playwrights message / intention, the text, the feature and the actualisation of the text in performance.</p> <p>The response is supported by well-chosen evidence, including quotations.</p>			
2	E8	<p>The candidate describes, in detail, aspects of the social or historical context in which the text was written, explaining how those aspects are reflected in the text, and making clear specific links to the theatre form, the context and the text.</p> <p>The discussion of the relevance of the text to today’s society is comprehensive, showing perceptive insight. It includes key aspects of its relevance today, which are clearly justified and unpacked.</p> <p>The response is supported by well-chosen evidence, including quotations.</p>			
3	E8	<p>The candidate describes, in detail, how costume would typically have been used in the theatre form or period making links to relevant features of the theatre form. They explain, in detail, how this technology would have been used in a specific way in a performance of the text, referring to symbolism, style, and colour.</p> <p>The discussion of how the use of costume could be used to reflect time and / or place is comprehensive, showing perceptive insight, and it clearly references the text, the context and the theatre form.</p> <p>The response is supported by well-chosen evidence including a detailed annotated sketch.</p>			