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3

91514



915140



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## Level 3 Drama, 2019

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

9.30 a.m. Wednesday 27 November 2019  
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 2–12 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.**

**Achievement**

**TOTAL**

**12**

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## INSTRUCTIONS

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

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

### PRESCRIBED PLAYWRIGHTS

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

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

Text: <u>Top Girls</u>
Playwright(s): <u>Caryl Churchill</u>
Theatre form or period: <u>Feminist</u>

## QUESTION ONE: USE OF TECHNOLOGY

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Select (✓) ONE technology typically used in your chosen theatre form or period.

☐ Costume

☒ Set

☐ Property (prop)

- (a) Explain how this technology would typically be used in a performance of your chosen text. Give specific details to support your answer. You may illustrate your answer with a sketch in the space on page 4 if you wish.

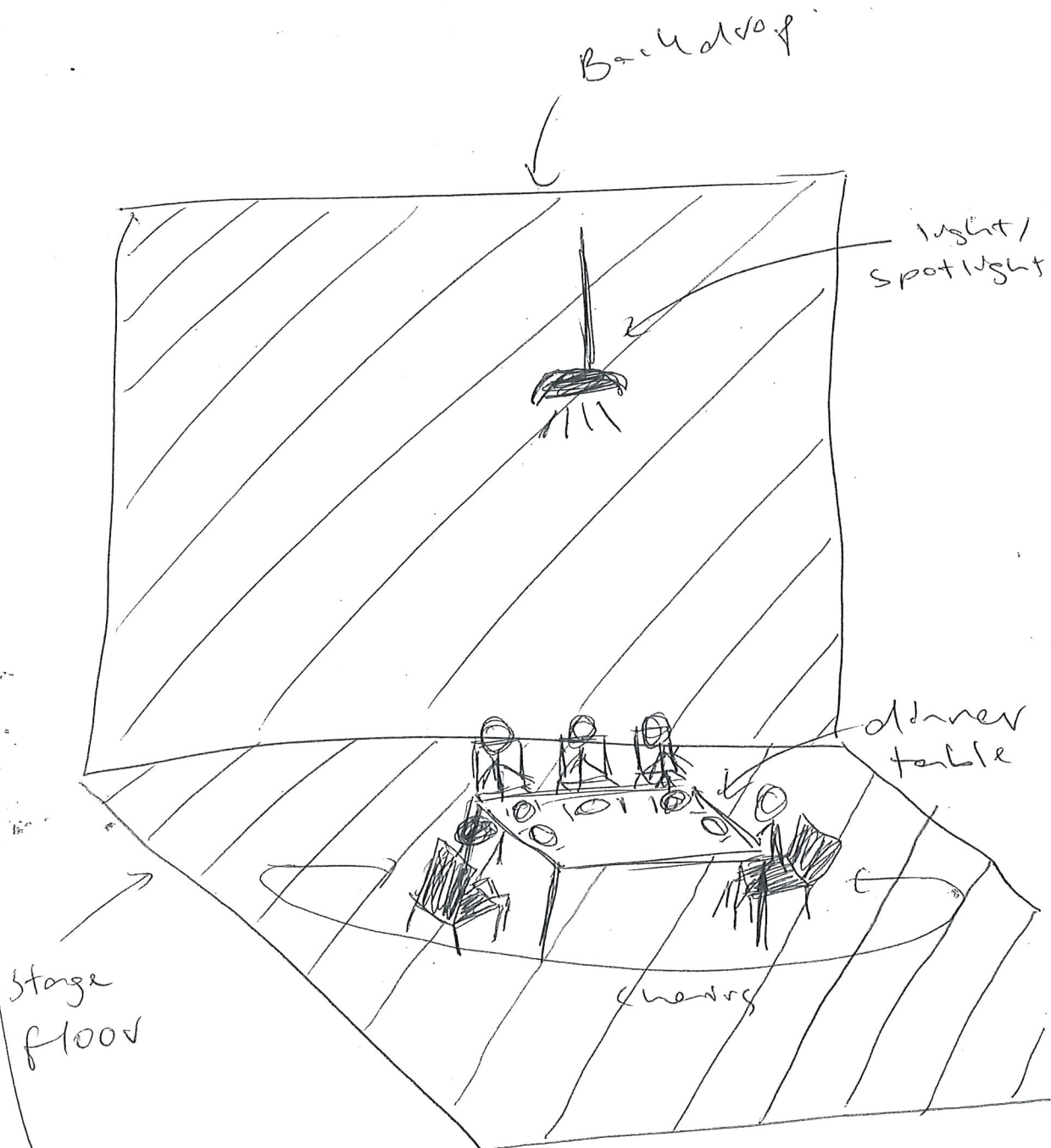
In Feminist theatre, sets are often in a minimalist style so as not to distract from the messages being conveyed on stage. More specifically, in Caryl Churchill's "Top Girls" the set is minimalist - there is a lack of colour <sup>with</sup> the background usually being black, straight edges and harsh lines, no embellishment or curtains or carpet, etc. For example, in Act 1 Scene 1 the central focus is Marlene having dinner with historical figures. Their conversation about their lives and experience being a woman is emphasised, or rather not distracted from, by the dinner table. The dinner table is the only part of the set that stands out in this scene ~~and so is~~ <sup>which puts</sup> the audience's attention on the characters sat at the table. The ~~table and~~ <sup>plain and</sup> ~~empty~~ mostly empty set also helps to highlight the characters as it contrasts with their ~~the~~ colour in their costumes and makeup.

Sketch in the space below if you want to support any part of your answers to Question One.  
Annotate the sketch(es) to explain the point(s) you are making.

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▨ = Black

\*not to scale\*





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- The purpose of having this plain and empty space is that it puts the audience's focus on the parts of the set where it isn't empty AKA where the characters are, and doesn't take away from the values that are being shown to the audience. In "Top Girls" every scene ~~has~~ has a set that ensures focus on ~~the character's~~ <sup>the Churchill's</sup> social commentary, which in this example ~~is about the patriarchy or something that~~ <sup>is about the patriarchy</sup> ~~directly relates to~~ and how women have to choose between being ~~happy or~~ <sup>a</sup> family or and being successful in their career.
- This lack of decoration and aesthetic also emphasises the lack of filter Churchill puts on reality within this play. She doesn't sugar-coat ~~it~~ <sup>the world</sup> or show it through rose-coloured glasses - it is ~~as true as~~ <sup>the ugly truth</sup> and she intentionally ~~properly~~ does this to show the audience what the reality is of ~~being a~~ <sup>being a</sup> woman //

## QUESTION TWO: USE OF A CONVENTION

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Identify an acting convention typical of the form or period.

- (a) Explain how the actor(s) would typically use the convention in a performance of a scene from your chosen text. Give specific details to support your answer.

An acting convention typical of feminist theatre is surface acting, which is when actors only portray the superficial state of their character, how they are viewed by others but not truly their raw character. For example, in "Top Girls" the main character Marlene is a manager of an employment agency who is inebriated and cold. The only time we ever take a look into who she really is, her past and her true feelings, is in the <sup>very last scene of</sup> ~~the play where she~~ ~~scene two where~~ reveals Joyce's (Marlene's sister) adopted daughter is Marlene's biological daughter. All other moments in the play it is as if the character has a mask which only lets the audience see Marlene's public appearance and how she is seen by others. She is never sad or happy or anything but cold and aloof.

(b) Discuss how the use of this convention is typical of the acting style of your chosen form or period. In your answer you could consider:

- how realistic/non-realistic the form is
- the intended effect of the use of the convention on the audience
- the function of an actor in the form or period.

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Surface acting is utilised by the actors in "Top Girls" so as to not <sup>take</sup> ~~abstract~~ away from what these characters are portraying. The point of feminist (and also political) theatre is not to entertain per se, but rather to comment on society and bring about change in the world. Through Marlene, Churchill wants the audience to realise how women are treated as lesser than men in the workplace despite being just as, if not more, focussed on <sup>career and success</sup> ~~their success in their career~~. Another ~~one~~ effect the convention has ~~is~~ is it essentially makes the character "faceless", like I said with the mask. It shows the audience that the people in this play could be anyone - even yourself. No added details about their personal life and very little character traits are displayed to render the character faceless and capable of being anyone. This makes the audience feel as though they are personally affected by what the characters experience.



### QUESTION THREE: CHARACTER RELATIONSHIP

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- (a) Describe the relationship between TWO key characters in your chosen text.

Marlene and Joyce are sisters, however they don't see each other very often and have polar opposite views about the world - particularly regarding politics. The final scene of the play is their first time seeing each other for about six years.

- (b) Explain how this relationship would be shown to the audience in a typical performance of the text. Give specific details to support your answer.

Marlene and Joyce's disconnect is shown through the dialogue. Throughout their conversation in the final scene of the play they talk over each other <sup>and interrupt</sup> each other regularly. This inability to communicate with each other conveys a disturbance in their relationship. Their clashing dialogue also helps to build tension as it takes longer to get to the point, specifically when Marlene talks about Angie, and her frustration with Joyce interrupting and talking over her leads to Marlene pointing out the fact Angie is her biological daughter despite Joyce having raised her. ~~This~~ Hearing ~~this~~ Marlene's claim of Angie hurts Joyce and adds to the tension and conflict in their relationship.



(c) Discuss how this relationship communicates an idea that is important to the form or period. In your answer you could consider:

- the relative status of different individuals or groups in the society of the time
- how the relationship reflects human behaviour
- social or political structures or values.

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Marlene and Joyce's negative relationship due to clashing opinions <sup>consequently</sup> ~~helps to~~ the idea of double standards for women. In this case, the double standard of being criticised for assuming the role of the traditional housewife (like ~~the Joyce~~ <sup>Joyce</sup> ~~alone~~) and being criticised for not assuming a traditional gender role and instead focusing on your career and ambitions (like Marlene does). This also conveys how there are no grey areas for women, ~~simplifying~~ simplifying the world to "black" and "white". Through Marlene and Joyce's relationship ~~Churchill~~ Churchill also sheds light on woman-on-woman hate and ~~that~~ <sup>how</sup> ~~that~~ that reveals women alone when facing these problems as these standards frame women's lives as competition against other women. The negativity and struggle Churchill shows in and as a result of this relationship is a reminder of the ugly truth about our patriarchal society - and urges us, ~~as~~ the audience, to think about

## Achievement Exemplar 2019

Subject	Drama		Standard	91514	Total score	12
Q	Grade score	Annotation				
1	A4	Technology of set is selected and a simple sketch used to support. Part A is explained. Part B focuses on the purpose, and is explained. The key message is supported with some evidence and linked to the technology. To gain a higher grade the candidate may have included greater detail and direct evidence from the selected form and text.				
2	A4	Identifies and explains how a convention would be used by an actor. Supports response with evidence from the text. Explains what the convention communicates about the text and makes reference to Churchill's intended effect to comment on the patriarchal structure of society. To gain a higher grade the candidate may have included greater detail on the convention, character and what is communicated by the convention about the character.				
3	A4	Identifies the relationship between two key characters. Explains simply how the relationship would be shown to the audience and attempts to explain the effect. Supports the response with limited reference to the text. To gain a higher grade the candidate may have included more detailed evidence, and a detailed explanation of the relationship and how it is representative of the form.				