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91215



Draw a cross through the box (X) if you have NOT written in this booklet

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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

## Level 2 Drama 2024

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

Credits: Four

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Discuss a drama or theatre form or period with reference to a text.	Discuss a drama or theatre form or period with reference to a text showing informed understanding.	Discuss a drama or theatre form or period with reference to a text showing perceptive understanding.

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.

Do not write in any cross-hatched area (XXXXX). This area will be cut off when the booklet is marked.

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

Merit

TOTAL 18

## INSTRUCTIONS

To answer the questions in this paper, name the drama/theatre form or period you have studied, and ONE text from the form or period to which you will refer.

**Drama/theatre forms** include (but are not limited to):

- medieval theatre
- commedia dell'arte
- Elizabethan theatre
- epic theatre
- melodrama
- Greek theatre
- New Zealand theatre.

(If the text was not written as a script – as, for example, in commedia dell'arte – give brief details of the action.)

Drama/theatre form or period: Elizabethan Theatre

Title of the text/play (or brief details of the action): Macbeth

Playwright/creator(s) (if applicable): William Shakespeare

**Features** of the drama/theatre form or period to which the questions refer may include:

- performance space (e.g. medieval use of pageant wagons)
- acting styles (e.g. the extravagant gestures of commedia dell'arte)
- themes or ideas (e.g. the Elizabethan wheel of fortune)
- conventions (e.g. use of asides in melodrama)
- use of technologies (e.g. mask in Greek theatre)
- historical/social context (e.g. the Great Depression in New Zealand theatre).



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### QUESTION ONE: Action and theme or idea

Action is a drama element. Action refers to the events happening in the text.

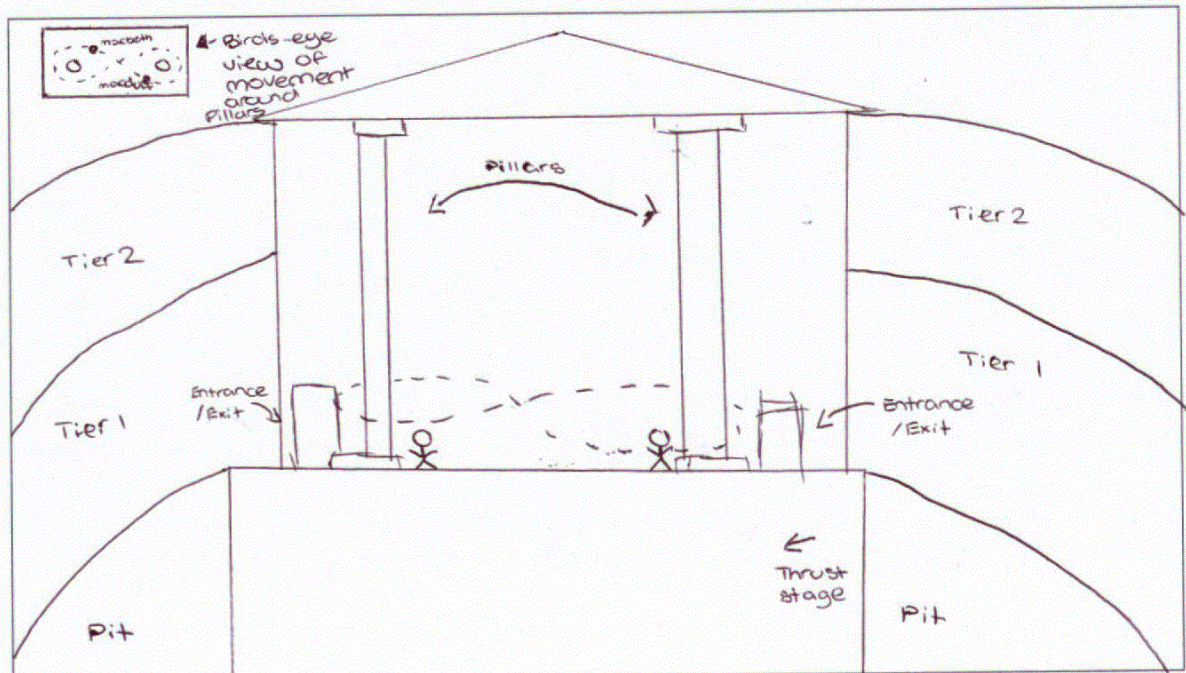
Identify a moment of action from the text:

macbeth and Macduff's final battle (Act 5, Scene 8).

- (a) Describe how this moment of action is typical of the drama/theatre form or period. Give specific details from the text to support your answer. You may sketch and make annotations in the space below.

This moment of action is typical of Elizabethan Theatre as it makes use of the performance space in a typical way, and it shows violence in a typical way. During macbeth and macduff's battle, the two would weave in and out of the pillars, staying on diagonals to each other (see diagram below). This is so that audience members on all 3 sides and 3 levels of the thrust stage could see the action at any given time, engaging them in the plot. During this battle, Macbeth is slain by Macduff despite prior warnings from the witches to be wary ("macbeth - beware Macduff, beware the thane of Fife" - A4S1), so Macbeth's body would have

*\* please continue reading at the back*





(b) Discuss how this action communicates a typical theme or idea.

You could consider:

- what one or more characters are feeling and/or thinking during the action
- the position of this action within the text (e.g. at the beginning or ending)
- the playwright's purpose.

Give specific details from the text to support your answer.

The final battle between Macbeth and Macduff communicates the theme of The Difference between Kingship and Tyranny. This moment of action is placed at the very end of the play, in Act 5 (the Resolution). Act 5 typically resolves prior conflict, revealing key ideas before making things right. In 'Macbeth', Macbeth is slain, with his tyranny revealed through Macduff saying "Behold which here stands / the usurper's cursed head". The conflict is then resolved by crowning Malcolm, King Duncan's rightful heir and noble son, as king of Scotland. Macduff's use of language through words such as 'cursed' to describe Macbeth after his death shows that Macduff feels hatred towards Macbeth, and thinks that he is an unjust king. Macduff says this quote directly to the audience, showing that they should also hate Macbeth and his tyrannical ways. This is in clear contrast to how the previous king, Duncan, is described after his death, with Macduff using words such as "verity", "nobility", and "stability" to describe him. It can be inferred that Duncan is described so positively as he is the rightful king, being crowned through birthright, whereas Macbeth is described negatively as he jumped the Great Chain of Being, being crowned due to murder. This shows us that Duncan, a king by birthright (similar to the monarch ~~at the~~ in 1606 James I) is noble, compared to Macbeth, the tyrant. This is how Act 5 scene 8 communicates kingship versus Tyranny.

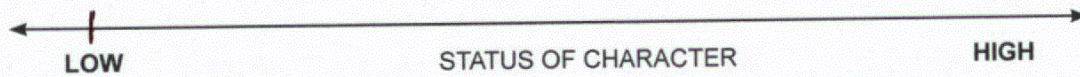


## QUESTION TWO: Status

Status refers to the social position of a character.

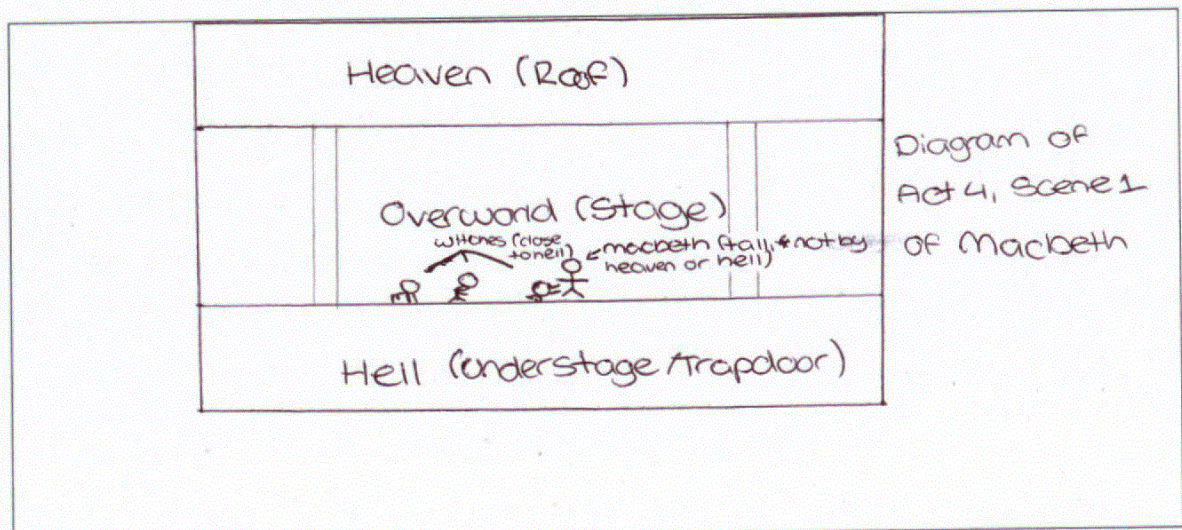
Identify a typical character from the text, and label on the arrowed line below the point that represents their status:

Character: The Witches



- (a) Describe how the typical acting style would be used to show the status of the character. Give specific details from the text to support your answer. You may sketch and make annotations in the space below.

In Elizabethan Theatre, supernatural characters such as the witches were always low status. This is due to them being from Hell, and therefore at the bottom of Aristotle's Great Chain of Being. In order to show this low status, actors would need to use the typical acting style to ~~appear~~ seem inhuman. For example, actors would hunch over and keep their bodies close to the ground, as the ground symbolised the underworld. Actors would use accents and pitch their voices up in order to portray the witches as women, as women were of low status. These, among other aspects, show how the witches are of low status.





- (b) Discuss how the status of the character reflects the social/historical context of your chosen drama/theatre form or period.

You could consider:

- the social structure of the time
- the gender roles in society at the time
- the values/religions/customs of the time.

Give specific details from the text to support your answer.

The witches being low status reflects not only the status of supernatural, but the status of women. The witches were included in Macbeth in order to please James I as he had a great interest in the supernatural (even writing a book entitled 'Daemonologie' in 1571). The witches were shown as low status in order to keep in line with the Protestantism in Elizabethan England when Macbeth was first written (1606). The witches being low status reflected the religious context at the time, as Heaven was above all and Hell was below all. The witches' status also reflected the role of women in society. In Macbeth, all the women are portrayed as evil and masculine, which is atypical of the genre. We see the witches' appearance described as masculine ("You should be women, yet your beards forbid me to interpret that you are so" - Banquo), whereas Lady Macbeth has the ambition and strength of a man ("Unsex me here and fill me from the crown to the toe top full of direst cruelty" - A1S5). With these women being abnormal due to their masculinity and evilness, they are brought down in status further than the normal woman. This is how the witches (and Lady Macbeth) being low status reflects the role of women in Elizabethan England.



### QUESTION THREE: Conventions

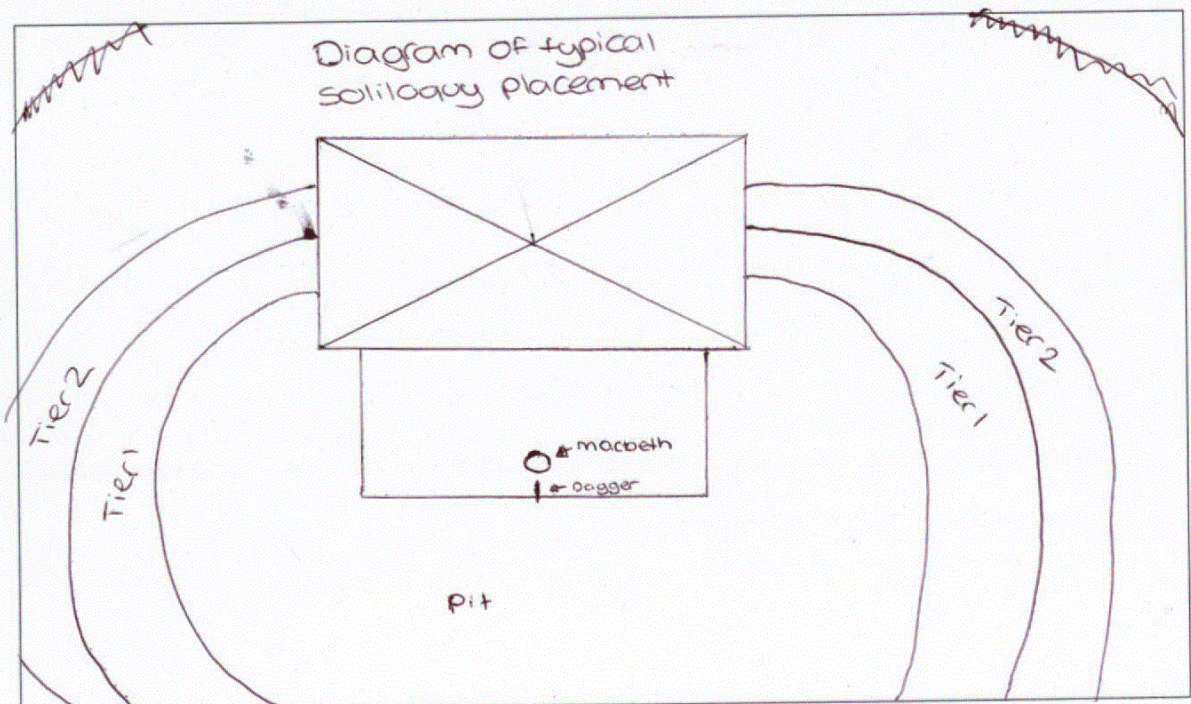
Conventions are the established ways of working within the drama/theatre form or period that explore meaning or deepen understanding.

Identify a convention typical of your chosen drama/theatre form or period:

Soliloquy

- (a) Describe how the convention would be used in a typical performance of the chosen text. Give specific details from the text to support your answer. You may sketch and make annotations in the space below.

Soliloquy would typically be used by characters of significance and/or high status in a moment of tension in order to express true thoughts and/or feelings to other characters (rarely) or the audience (commonly). In a typical performance of Macbeth, soliloquy would be notably used in Act 2, Scene 1 in which we hear the well known "Is this a dagger which I see before me, the handle toward my hand?" soliloquy in which we hear Macbeth expressing first signs of madness and hallucination. Macbeth would be placed front centre in order for this important moment to be communicated to all 3 sides and 3 levels of the audience.





(b) Discuss the purpose of this use of the convention.

You could consider:

- the creation of layers of meaning
- the impact on a traditional audience
- how the convention was used across the form or period.

Give specific details from the text to support your answer.

The purpose of using soliloquy in Elizabethan Theatre is to unveil a key idea or theme of the play. Macbeth's soliloquy in Act 2 Scene 1 unveils the theme of the Overwhelming Power of unchecked Ambition. This is because we see Macbeth's ambition to be king (and therefore have to kill Duncan) drive him to insanity to the point that he is hallucinating a bloody dagger in front of him. This would impact a traditional Elizabethan audience in a way that would intrigue them and engage them in the play, as they are given insight into Macbeth's mind evoking sympathy and connection. Soliloquy was also used heavily poetically and metaphorically and because of this, many different meanings could be created and taken away as a lesson. Another famous Elizabethan play with a soliloquy which reflects this is William Shakespeare's 'Hamlet'. In 'Hamlet', we hear the famous "To be or not to be - that is the question" soliloquy. This soliloquy carries many layers of meaning, as Hamlet may be mourning the loss of his loved ones through the soliloquy, but could be questioning his own mortality and inevitable death. This is how the convention of soliloquy was used in Macbeth's "Is this a dagger" moment, and also in Hamlet's "To be or not to be" moment in Elizabethan Theatre.



Extra space if required.  
Write the question number(s) if applicable.

QUESTION  
NUMBER

1 a been dragged offstage in order to keep an aspect of realism, which is typical of Elizabethan Theatre. Both of these aspects work together to make the final battle between Macbeth and Macduff typical of Elizabethan Theatre.



## Merit

**Subject:** Drama

**Standard:** 91215

**Total score:** 18

Q	Grade score	Marker commentary
One	06	The candidate gave a clear description of the moment of action and how it was typical of the theatre form, and supported this with an annotated sketch. In part (b) they were able to articulate how the moment communicated the typical theme. To reach E7, the candidate needed to make more perceptive links to the text's purpose.
Two	06	The candidate gave a clear description of the typical acting style used for the character and their status. This was supported with an annotated sketch. In part (b) they were able to explain what this revealed about the context of the theatre form. To reach E7, the candidate needed to make perceptive links to the text's purpose.
Three	06	The candidate gave a clear description of how this convention would be used in a typical performance of the text. In part (b), they were able to explain the effect on a traditional audience. To reach E7, the candidate needed to choose evidence from the text that clearly supported their ideas and make perceptive links to the text's purpose.