

National Certificate of Educational Achievement

2014 Assessment Report

Drama Level 2

- 91215 Discuss a drama or theatre form or period with reference to a text**
- 91219 Discuss drama elements, techniques, conventions and technologies within live performance**

COMMENTARY

Overall performance was very similar between the two standards. This is an indication that candidates are equally well prepared for each paper, although there is a clear preference for candidates to sit the live performance paper.

It is recommended candidates prepare for this examination by familiarising themselves with the likely language of the questions. The assessment specifications and the explanatory notes in the standard are useful guides to the terms that can be expected in questions.

At this level, understanding of the terms ‘techniques’, ‘conventions’, ‘technologies’ and ‘elements’ is expected and candidates should be able to select and name components of these as required without further explanation in the question.

In addition, candidates are expected to have an understanding of more sophisticated drama concepts such as character status and social context as appropriate to the question being asked.

To achieve with Excellence for each of these standards candidates are required to be able to make connections between the specific and the universal. Candidates are required to make connections to the wider world of the form or period for AS91215, and to themes and performance as a whole for AS91219.

STANDARD REPORTS

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

ACHIEVEMENT

Candidates who were awarded Achievement for this standard demonstrated the required skills and knowledge. They commonly:

- described costume briefly and/or sketched relevant costume
- identified character and described purpose or function simply
- referred solely to text rather than widening out to typicality of form or period
- identified a key aspect of the social context
- recognised and used the language of drama simply
- made accurate but generalised statements.

NOT ACHIEVED

Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They commonly:

- identified a costume and/or sketched a costume but did not provide clear and specific details
- identified a character from the text in concrete terms only
- identified a generalised aspect of social context that could be any time or place rather than identifying key characteristics of the form or period

- misunderstood more sophisticated drama concepts such as character function, character type and social context.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Merit commonly:

- gave relevant and specific details in their answers such as details of fabric type for costume
- understood and were able to explain concepts such as social class or ethnicity as related to character
- used relevant quotes and examples to support answers
- made links between text and typicality of form or period
- made clear and specific reference to elements of the chosen text to support answers, such as action or setting
- were able to explain how aspects of the social context of the play were similar or different to the world of the playwright
- used the language of drama accurately and confidently.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH EXCELLENCE

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement with Merit, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Excellence commonly:

- made insightful links between costume and form or period including the shape and size of performance space or the technologies available at the time
- described wider purpose or function of character, making clear links to audience understanding and playwright's intention
- referenced other relevant characters from texts to illustrate typicality
- made informed links between text and typicality of form or period.
- made insightful connections between the social context and the text.

OTHER COMMENTS

Approximately 40% of candidates wrote about Shakespearean texts, with *Othello*, *Twelfth Night* and *Macbeth* being the most frequently chosen texts.

A further 30% of candidates wrote about Brechtian texts. *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* was the most popular followed closely by *Mother Courage* and *The Exception to the Rule*.

A small number of candidates wrote about Brechtian texts published before 1920 which do not typify Epic Theatre as strongly as those written later. A further 15% of candidates wrote about Commedia dell'Arte. The remaining candidates wrote about Greek Theatre, New Zealand and Pasifika theatre, Theatre of the Absurd, Victorian and Restoration Drama.

Candidates answered question two about character most successfully, while question three about the social context had the greatest number of candidates who did not attempt the question. However this question also generated the second highest number of excellences. Weaker candidates would improve their performance by having the confidence to read and understand the question and write about what they know.

Candidates who wrote about a text they had written themselves rather than using an original text were not able to discuss the world of the playwright of the time of the form or period which was a disadvantage when answering Question 3.

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

ACHIEVEMENT

Candidates who were awarded Achievement for this standard demonstrated the required skills and knowledge. They commonly:

- identified the time shown in a drama and gave a simple description of how time was communicated, usually referring to the use of a convention such as flashback
- described the characters involved in a moment of tension and gave an clear explanation of the cause of the tension
- identified a soliloquy or monologue and clearly described the feelings or thoughts of the speaker
- recognised and used the language of drama simply
- made accurate but generalised statements.

NOT ACHIEVED

Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They commonly:

- described the plot of the drama but did not answer the questions set
- identified time, tension or a convention without supporting detail
- lacked an understanding of key drama terms such as technique, technology or convention
- wrote about performances that did not encompass the elements of drama, such as concerts or films rather than live drama performances.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Merit commonly:

- gave specific detail in explanations, often supplying quotes from the performance
- provided clear, detailed annotated sketches
- answered all parts of the questions-
- understood and used the language of drama accurately and specifically.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH EXCELLENCE

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement with Merit, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Excellence commonly:

- understood and explained the main ideas or themes of the drama insightfully
- showed a depth of knowledge of theatre technologies used in the performance
- wrote insightfully about character and role and connected these to the main ideas

- linked ideas of the drama to their own experience, issues in society and the wider world outside the play
- were able to create responses to the question that moved from the particular to the abstract
- wrote fluent, thoughtful and insightful responses.

OTHER COMMENTS

Candidates who did not achieve ~~the paper~~ would benefit from applying basic exam techniques such as reading the whole paper and answering the questions asked. Many candidates who were awarded Achievement wrote at great length in the first part of the questions but wrote very little or did not complete the other parts.

While candidates generally achieved similarly across all three questions, weaker candidates found writing about monologue or a similar convention the most challenging question.

Candidates who saw thought-provoking professional theatre or high quality amateur productions that made clever or striking use of theatre technologies to support the performances of the actors were able to respond to questions in depth.