

Assessment Report

On this page

[Level 2 Drama 2020](#) ▾

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Standards [91215](#) [91219](#)

Part A: Commentary

After what was a difficult academic year, it was pleasing to see a considerable number of candidates meeting the standards at the higher levels of achievement across both papers.

At Level 2, candidates are expected to show an understanding of a theatre form in relation to a studied text. This means making connections between features of the form and the text's purpose. Additionally, they need to show an understanding of the Drama aspects used within live performance. This means exploring the aspects and the effects of these within live performances performed in and viewed. They are expected to use detailed evidence to support their responses.

Candidates should have a sound understanding of the terms 'elements', 'techniques', 'conventions' and 'technologies'. The Achievement Standard explanatory notes and assessment specifications provide useful guides to the terms used in the papers.

Many candidates showed an understanding of their studied theatre form and live performances (these may have been recorded performances in 2020) and were able to discuss connections to purpose and the wider world (this included the historical/social context and/or the candidate's own and/or the wider world).

With the option provided to view recorded performances, candidates wrote about a wide range of high-quality performances.

The glossaries at the start of both papers supported candidates to develop their responses, but familiarity with drama terminology needed to be secure enough to ensure that responses were accurate and confident. A confident use of drama terminology saw candidates reach higher levels of achievement, through well-composed, insightful explanations.

Candidates continue to show only a developing understanding of performance conventions and should be encouraged to grow their understanding of this Drama aspect. Conventions are the ways of working in drama: any dramatic vehicle used to deliver meaning through performance.

Candidates who unpacked the requirements of the questions provided stronger answers. Bullet points in the questions are a guide to the selection of relevant information, and not a list of what must be covered in their answer.

Part B: Report on standards

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

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- identified a text relevant to the drama or theatre form or period
- linked responses to the text when discussing the key features of the drama or theatre form or period
- supported the response with some evidence from the text, usually using specific details rather than quotations
- demonstrated only very limited understanding of the ideas, purpose, theatre form or period and/or the text

- described use of the typical acting style to play characters in a relationship, with some specificity, but were limited to Achievement when choosing only to discuss one actor
- described typical themes or ideas of the form or period communicated in the text, with some specificity, but could not articulate the impact on a traditional audience
- described how a performance convention would be used in a typical performance of the text, using description and/or sketch, with some specificity.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- gave responses that were incomplete, or failed to answer any number of the questions asked
- offered limited responses to the questions
- failed to articulate what was typical of the drama or theatre form or period
- wrote about modern adaptations, which led to incorrect responses about the typical drama or theatre form or period
- gave generic responses about the drama or theatre form or period without any reference to, or providing any evidence from, a text
- focused on plot detail without addressing the questions
- did not identify an acting style or demonstrate understanding of the purpose of the relationship
- showed little understanding of themes and ideas, identifying a theme or idea but not describing it further
- were focused on elements, techniques and technologies, rather than conventions.

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

- showed clear knowledge of the drama or theatre form or period and/or text across all responses
- responded to both parts of the question, in some detail
- supported responses with detailed evidence
- used some specific terminology related to the drama or theatre form

- showed clear and coherent understanding of the key features of the drama or theatre period or form used in the selected text
- understood the effect of performance features, particularly in relation to themes and ideas
- understood the historical, social and political context of the drama or theatre form or period, and the ideas within, and purpose of, the text, but not always in connection with one another.

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

- used the specific terminology related to the drama or theatre form or period
- used specific, well-considered evidence to support their responses, providing relevant and meaningful references to the text that were well-chosen to support answers
- used insightful evidence to show clear understanding of drama or theatre form or period and the text, e.g. evidence from historical/social/political context, playwrights/theatre practitioners
- demonstrated insightful understanding of the purpose of the text, and how the purpose reflected the social/political context at the time of writing/performance
- demonstrated insightful understanding of the meaning that the traditional audience drew from the performance.

Standard specific comments

Overall, candidates demonstrated a strong knowledge of the drama or theatre forms or periods. Some candidates demonstrated an in-depth, in some cases insightful, knowledge of the drama or theatre form or period, but did not make specific references to a text and therefore did not meet the Achievement Criteria.

Those who wrote about modern performance adaptations of texts were often limited in their answers, as they were unable to articulate their understanding of the historical/social context of the theatre form or period.

Using specific and detailed evidence from a text across the range of responses helped candidates to develop clear and perceptive comments.

The most common forms or periods written about successfully were Elizabethan theatre, epic theatre, Ancient Greek theatre and feminist political theatre;

however, absurdism, medieval theatre, musical theatre, melodrama and New Zealand/Pasifika theatre also featured, with candidates achieving at all levels.

Candidates who wrote about commedia dell'arte showed a tendency to write about the form generically, without any references to a specific text. Candidates choosing this form are advised to choose one specific performance and make clear links to this in their responses.

A clear understanding of conventions would help candidates to develop accurate and coherent responses.

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

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- showed some accurate understanding of the terminology used in the questions
- used some drama terminology, not always correctly
- gave generalised or repetitive responses
- offered limited description or evidence
- described simply the use of, and meaning created by, conventions, techniques and technologies in live performance.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- gave incomplete responses, or failed to answer the questions asked
- repeated what had been written in the bullet points without further discussion of the performance
- showed a very rudimentary understanding of terminology
- had only a very rudimentary understanding of the performance
- focused on the play or the playwright, rather than a live performance
- focused on the plot of the performance, rather than drama elements, techniques, conventions and technologies

- gave limited responses with little specific evidence about the use of conventions, techniques and technologies in performance.

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

- responded to both parts of the questions, in some detail
- demonstrated clear and coherent understanding of the performances, supported by detailed evidence
- used drama terminology accurately and in a detailed manner
- developed responses that, where directed, were specific about chosen moments
- explained use of convention, technologies and techniques in performance clearly and in detail
- discussed impact by referencing specific drama elements, including mood, time and place
- explained references to wider themes and ideas, purpose, issues and messages in a confident, detailed and evidenced manner.

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

- had a strong command of drama terminology, and a high level of drama knowledge
- demonstrated a detailed and perceptive understanding of performances, referencing the playwright's and/or director's intentions
- 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
- discussed in-depth aspects of the performance and their impact
- understood the role of audience in a performance
- 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.

Standard specific comments

Overall, candidates showed some thoughtful understanding of live performances.

A small number of candidates wrote about written scripts rather than performances performed in or viewed. Candidates are advised to read direction in the questions carefully before crafting their responses.

Drama performances that were complex in form and purpose provided rich material for candidates to construct responses. Candidates who wrote about musical theatre had difficulty showing perceptive understanding. This does not suggest that musical theatre is inappropriate – more that candidates need to be guided to look beyond the aesthetics of the performance, to focus on the powerful messages that can be delivered through a range of performances within this theatre form.

Candidates were able to write about recorded performances. Some recorded performances chosen provided candidates with a wealth of opportunity to reach higher levels of achievement, eg *Mr Red Light*. However, others proved less successful, partly because of the way that they were filmed. Candidates should be guided to write about recorded performances that provide opportunities to write about the aspects outlined in the assessment specifications.

Additionally, candidates should be encouraged to write about the recorded performance and avoid speculating in their responses about how the performance might have been if they had seen it live.

A clear understanding of conventions would help candidates develop accurate and coherent responses. Those who wrote about conventions in their own work showed greater understanding of what conventions are and why they are used. Split stage, monologue and chorus in particular were not well understood.

Candidates must be careful when making connections to the wider world that these are linked clearly back to the performance. COVID-19, the Christchurch Mosque Shootings and the Black Lives Matter movement were all discussed in some depth, but relevant links back to the specifics of the performance were not always made clear.

A number of candidates wrote about their own devised performances that boasted topics such as suicide and drug use, written about in a manner that was often generalised and ill-informed. Consideration should be given to guidance provided to candidates regarding the choice of material and the manner in which this is managed – with accuracy and sensitivity.

[Drama subject page](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/subjects/assessment-reports/drama-12/)

Previous years' reports

[2019 \(PDF, 290KB\)](#)

[2018 \(PDF, 112KB\)](#)

[2017 \(PDF, 42KB\)](#)

[2016 \(PDF, 208KB\)](#)