

2023 NCEA Assessment Report

Subject:	Drama
Level:	Level 2
Achievement standard(s):	91215, 91219

General commentary

As is the case historically, candidates who read, understood, and responded to the entire question, rather than answering individual bullet points in isolation, provided stronger answers. Bullet points are a guide to the selection of relevant information and are designed to support scaffolding of a comprehensive answer, but are not to be treated as the question.

As such, it is noted that candidates continue to find it a challenge to unpack the questions themselves. Candidates should be supported to understand how the written instruction provided, including definitions and bullet points, can be used effectively to ensure greater understanding of the question itself, and as scaffolding towards a perceptive response.

This may also support candidates to provide more specific detail in their responses, appropriately aligned with the question. Candidates need to ensure evidence is specific to the question and meaningful in the context of their response, rather than generalised and rote learned. Sketch boxes are also useful tools to enhance responses in this manner, providing a space for the candidate to communicate extra detail.

At Level 2, candidates should have a sound understanding of the terms ‘elements’, ‘techniques’, ‘conventions’, and ‘technologies’. Familiarity with drama terminology ensures that responses are accurate. A confident grasp of drama terminology saw candidates reach higher levels of achievement through accurate, well-composed answers. There is a concerning trend of some candidates demonstrating that they are unfamiliar with the drama terminology captured within both standards.

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

Assessment

The examination included three questions, and candidates were required to respond to all three. Each question had two parts, with a response required for both. All three questions required candidates to apply their understanding of the theatre form or period with reference to a text, from which they were to provide detailed evidence.

Commentary

As in previous years, the choice of theatre form makes a significant difference to the quality of the candidate’s response, and as a consequence, their success in this examination. This year, candidates who wrote about epic theatre, Elizabethan theatre, Greek theatre, post-war American realism, feminist theatre, and total theatre tended to provide more perceptive

responses. Those who wrote about musicals, commedia dell'arte, and melodrama were not as successful. Candidates should be encouraged to choose theatre forms or periods where there are typical and traditional texts that can be perceptively linked to the specific historical and social context.

Candidates who chose to write about texts that clearly exemplify their form or period were the most successful. These texts contain features that are clearly typical for the form or period, and these features can be perceptively discussed in relationship to the text's purpose and the wider drama or theatre form or period. Writing about texts that are inspired by a form or period, that contain a mix of different forms or periods, or that are adapted for a modern audience, tends to lead to answers that are rudimentary in their understanding of the traditional form or period.

Candidates should also be mindful that where a film version of the text is studied, there needs to be greater consideration of how this would be staged for a traditional audience, particularly when dealing with historical forms or periods.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- referred to a theatre form with limited reference to the text
- referred to a text with limited relevance to the drama or theatre form or period
- demonstrated understanding of a key character and their character type for Question 1, but could not show adequate understanding of the purpose of the character type in the text
- demonstrated understanding of the typical costume of a character for Question 2, but could not explain what the costume communicated about the world of the play
- identified a historical event for Question 3, but could not articulate how this event impacted the drama or theatre form or period, nor explain how the event impacted on the text itself.

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

- produced responses that showed clear knowledge of the drama or theatre form or period and their chosen text
- supported their responses with detailed evidence from the text
- demonstrated clear understanding of the purpose of including the character type in the text for Question 1
- demonstrated clear understanding of the typical costume and what it communicated about the world of the play for Question 2
- provided detailed understanding of the impact of the historical event or period on the form or period as a whole, with clear reference to the text, for Question 3.

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

- used specific, well-considered evidence to support their responses, providing relevant and meaningful references to the text that were well-chosen to articulate an insightful perspective
- produced responses that demonstrated perceptive understanding of the chosen text in relationship to the drama or theatre form or period
- demonstrated perceptive understanding of features of the form or period in relationship to text's purpose, supported by well-chosen references to the text and form or period.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- produced generic responses that did not show an adequate understanding of the drama or theatre form or period
- produced responses that referred to an adaptation of a traditional text
- interpreted the questions posed incorrectly, produced responses that were incomplete, or failed to answer one or more of the questions
- identified features rather than describing
- produced responses that did not accurately identify a character type for Question 1
- produced responses that did not adequately describe the costume of the character for Question 2
- produced responses that identified a historical event, but did not yet demonstrate how this was reflected in the text, or how it impacted the drama or theatre form or period.

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

Assessment

The examination included three questions, and candidates were required to respond to all three. Each question had two parts, with candidates being required to respond to both. All three questions required candidates to apply their understanding of drama elements, techniques, conventions, and technologies within a live performance(s), from which they were to provide detailed evidence.

Commentary

On the whole, candidates were challenged by the content of this examination, and particularly the content in Questions 2 and 3.

Candidates' careful selection of live performances to discuss was essential to their success. With regard to performances viewed or performed in, candidates should be guided to discuss performances that provide opportunities to write about the aspects outlined in the assessment specifications. Poor text choice can affect the candidate's ability to answer questions with specific depth.

Candidates who connected their responses across part (a) and part (b) of the questions tended to demonstrate more insightful understanding of drama aspects in the live performance. Candidates should be guided to unpack the questions carefully, to ensure clear understanding of what is required for each part, and how the responses provided in the two parts can be complementary to one another.

In connection with this, candidates are required to show understanding of, and use accurate, specific drama terminology in their responses in order to achieve this standard. Candidates should have a sound understanding of the terms 'elements', 'techniques', 'conventions', and 'technologies'. Familiarity with drama terminology needed to be secure enough to ensure that responses were accurate. Even with the concept of subtext being flagged in the Assessment Specifications and being glossed within the examination, candidates found it challenging to demonstrate a clear understanding of this terminology.

Candidates who provided specific details were the most successful in their responses. Evidence that was well-chosen, and therefore meaningful in the context of the response, supported effective communication of perceptive ideas.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- identified and described simply
- produced responses that showed some accurate understanding of the terminology used in the questions
- responded to the question in a generic manner, with a focus on plot description
- provided a basic sketch to support their response, but not with sufficient detail to support achievement at a higher level
- provided little evidence to support their responses, which saw them unable to reach higher levels of achievement despite quality of ideas
- provided some connection between responses in part (a) and part (b) of each question
- repeated details from bullet points provided in part (b) of the question, but did not provide adequate connection to their chosen performance.

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

- wrote about performances that had sufficient depth to allow detailed responses
- produced responses that directly addressed the question and that connected across parts (a) and (b)
- demonstrated clear and coherent understanding of the aspects of live performances, supported by detailed and relevant evidence
- used drama terminology accurately and in a detailed manner
- provided detailed annotated sketches to support their answers
- explained, with varying degrees of success, connections between the performance and wider themes and ideas, purpose, issues, and messages.

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

- responded fully to all parts of all questions
- produced responses that were well-structured and fluently written, and that integrated well-chosen evidence, from both within and outside of the performance, to great effect
- 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
- made perceptive links between the live performance and the wider context of the theatrical work, including understanding of the history and purpose of the work itself
- commented on the drama aspects and deeper themes in a way that demonstrated perceptive knowledge of the performance, the world of the play, and the wider world.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- gave incomplete responses, or failed to answer the questions
- provided responses that did not identify a convention, subtext, or symbolic meaning
- showed only a very rudimentary understanding of the performance and provided little, if any, detail
- focused on the plot of the performance

- provided responses that either did not identify, or indicated a limited understanding of, the aspects of the performance
 - wrote too briefly, simply, or generically to demonstrate understanding at an Achievement level.
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