

2024 NCEA Assessment Report

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

General commentary

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.

A confident grasp of drama terminology saw candidates reach higher levels of achievement through accurate, well-composed answers. For AS 91215, candidates are expected to have a sound understanding of the terms 'typical acting style', and 'features' of the selected theatre form or period. AS 91219 requires understanding of the terms 'elements', 'techniques', 'technologies', and 'conventions' to support accurate responses. There is a concerning trend of some candidates demonstrating that they are unfamiliar with the drama terminology employed within both standards.

AS 91215 requires candidates to demonstrate an understanding of a theatre form, using detailed evidence from the text. AS 91219 requires candidates to use detailed evidence from the live performance. To do so successfully, candidates needed an accurate and in-depth knowledge of the text or the performance. Candidates who demonstrated in-depth knowledge using detailed evidence were rewarded with higher levels of achievement.

Report on individual achievement standard(s)

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

The choice of theatre form makes a significant difference to the quality of the candidate's response, and consequently, their success in this examination. The forms or periods successfully written about were Elizabethan theatre, Epic theatre, Greek theatre, and Absurd theatre. In all these forms, candidates were rewarded at all levels of achievement. Candidates who wrote about Commedia dell'arte, Melodrama, musical theatre, and New Zealand theatre were typically 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.

In this examination, candidates were expected to apply their understanding of the typical acting style for the theatre form or period. Those who correctly identified the acting style and explained how it would be used generally attained higher grades.

The exploration of traditional texts, rather than modern adaptations of a text, or texts that combined more than one theatre form, often created a deeper and more accurate understanding of the traditional historical/social context. For example, in writing about a New Zealand play as being an example of Epic theatre, candidates struggled to successfully articulate a full understanding of the traditions of the chosen theatre form or period, as opposed to their understanding of Brecht and his purpose.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- referred to a text relevant to the drama or theatre form or period
- referred to the theatre form with limited reference to the text
- demonstrated understanding of a moment of action, but could not show adequate understanding of how the action communicated a theme or idea
- identified a character and their status, but could not show adequate understanding of how the status reflected the social/historical context
- demonstrated understanding of a convention, but could not show adequate understanding of the purpose of its use.

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
- responded to both parts of each question and supported their responses with detailed evidence from the text
- demonstrated clear understanding of the action in a moment and how it communicated a typical theme or idea
- demonstrated clear understanding of the status of a character and how it reflected the social/historical context
- demonstrated clear understanding of the convention and its purpose
- showed detailed understanding of the context of the form or period.

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

- produced original responses
- used specific, well-considered evidence to support their responses, providing relevant, well-chosen, and meaningful references to the text
- produced responses that demonstrated insightful understanding of a drama or theatre form or period, and how the text reflected this
- produced responses that articulated perceptive understanding of texts, and therefore the playwright's purpose and the world of the play
- demonstrated perceptive understanding of features of the form or period and why they were utilised, along with the impact on a traditional audience.

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

- produced generic responses about the drama or theatre form or period without any reference to, or providing any evidence from, a text
- produced responses that referred to more than one form, and as a result lacked specificity

- produced responses that referred to live theatre, their own work, television, and/or film
- interpreted the questions posed incorrectly, produced responses that were incomplete, or failed to answer one or more of the questions
- produced responses that did not accurately identify a moment of action
- produced responses that did not accurately identify the typical acting style
- produced responses that did not accurately identify a convention of 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

Candidates' careful selection of live performances to discuss is essential to their success. With regard to both performances seen or performed in, candidates should be guided to discuss performances that provide opportunities to write about the aspects outlined in the assessment specifications.

When responses showed connections across part (a) and part (b) of the questions, more insightful understanding of drama aspects in the live performance was demonstrated. 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.

Candidates who used the sketch boxes well included quality annotations alongside their sketches, and this supported their responses to be increasingly detailed. Candidates are encouraged to see the value of carefully annotated sketches to support their responses, and are reminded that they are not marked on artistic merit.

In part (b) of each question, candidates who were able to make deep and authentic connections to the wider world tended to achieve higher levels of success. Tenuous links to the performance and current events/issues saw a lower level of achievement.

Candidates are required to show understanding of and use accurate, specific drama terminology in their responses to achieve this standard. Candidates should have a sound understanding of the terms 'elements', 'techniques', 'conventions', and 'technologies'. A solid understanding of drama terminology is required to confidently provide accurate responses.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- identified and described simply some elements, techniques, conventions, or technologies
- responded to the question in a generic manner, with a focus on plot description
- discussed the impact of the drama aspect with limited evidence
- provided little evidence to support their responses, which saw them unable to reach higher levels of achievement

- provided limited specific detail in part (a) of the question, which impacted the overall grade, regardless of the quality of the response to part (b)
- used basic annotations in sketches
- provided some connection between responses in part (a) and part (b) of each question
- repeated details from bullet points provided in part (b), 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
- demonstrated a clear understanding of the purpose of conventions
- chose relevant 'key moments' from the performance
- explained the use of techniques clearly, covering at least two techniques in some detail
- showed a clear understanding of technologies and how, in combination, they supported a key message of the performance selected
- attempted to make links to the performance and wider world
- provided detailed annotated sketches to support their answers
- used drama terminology accurately and in a detailed manner
- used specific and relevant detail when discussing their points
- made connections between the performance and wider themes and ideas, purpose, issues, and messages of the play.

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 the performance, to show comprehensive understanding
- made clear and insightful links between different drama aspects which were supported by specific and relevant evidence
- established connections between the specific moment / scene discussed and the broader themes of the play
- made perceptive links between the live performance and the wider context of the theatrical work, including an understanding of the history and purpose of the work itself
- supported responses with highly appropriate evidence from their performance that linked their knowledge of the performance to their own experiences and / or wider world issues.

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

- provided incomplete responses, or failed to answer the questions
- provided responses that did not identify a convention, technique, or a technology
- 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
- focused on the plot of the performance.