



A-level

# **Drama and Theatre**

7262/W Drama and theatre

Report on the Examination

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## General Comments

- Teachers are to be commended for their role in guiding this 2024 cohort to attain the A level standard.
- As in all subjects and at all levels, the most significant factor in any student’s success in a written examination paper lies in whether or not they **read** and **understand** the precise demands of their chosen questions and then **focus** on those demands consistently throughout their answers. Examiners noted with some disappointment that sometimes, students across all ability levels, disadvantaged themselves by failing to target the focus of their chosen questions.
- Questions on the set texts follow a familiar pattern but they each have very specific requirements. If the question asks about how to achieve an ‘audience response’ to a character, students who fail to consider and write about ‘audience’ response – even when offering lucid interpretations of the character - cannot and did not achieve a mark in the upper levels.
- In all sections of the paper, where students were asked to write about performance it was noticeable that more successful answers demonstrated a better descriptive vocabulary and so were able to convey the effects they wanted to create. Some weaker answers are still “listing” performance skills, for example “On this line I would use a stern tone (vocal), a wide gait (physical) and a furrowed brow (facial)”. Where this formula is consistently repeated, it rarely creates the intended effects.
- There were a few rubric infringements. In Section A, students sometimes wrote about only one section of the play when two had been stipulated. Other students wrote about more than the stipulated number of sections, so that some of their work attracted no credit.
- In Sections B, though few students had written about completely the wrong extract from the play, it was not uncommon for students to focus on parts of the printed extract that fell outside the line number range stipulated in the questions.
- In Section C, a considerable number of students chose to write about productions that offered them limited opportunities to address the precise focus of their chosen question.
- As mentioned in previous reports, there were several instances where every student in a particular cohort offered exactly the same design ideas in Question 3 of the Section B texts, suggesting a ‘corporate’ vision of design for the play.
- Students should be reminded that, where they are answering design questions, they will be expected to support their answers with clearly labelled – and neatly drawn - sketches. Examiners noted a decline in the quality of sketches and diagrams offered this series. Some students’ sketches – especially those of costumes - suggested limited experience of practising how to create a theatrical sketch
- By contrast, some students produced detailed sketches which were very clearly labelled but did not support their ideas with written text. Sketches are supportive but students need to be aware that “all questions require answers in continuous prose”.
- As in previous series, students’ references to ‘Social, Cultural and Historical contexts’ were varied in quality. The majority of students were able to incorporate some pertinent references to context in their answers in Sections A and B, although the use of identical ‘freestanding’ generic ‘SCH paragraphs’ at the beginning of an answer was still prevalent.

- Some students produced extensive references to ‘Social, Cultural and Historical Contexts’ which were not made relevant to the question as asked. This often included extraneous biographical detail.
- As always, examiners reported a wide variety of achievement in reference to quotation. Students should be reminded that the most effective method of quotation is to use complete phrases or lines. Use of line or page numbers, or truncated quotation, linked by ellipses, is to be avoided.
- Reference to Total Dramatic Effectiveness for Section C was also inconsistent. Many students omitted to refer to this at all – this affected their achievement as it is a key plank of each of the questions. Many students wrote “which contributed to the total dramatic effectiveness of the production” at the end of each paragraph without explaining ‘how’.
- Some students continue to refer mistakenly to ‘proxemics’ as a ‘performance skill’ - which it is not - and the term ‘gait’ (a mode of walking) continues to be misused as a synonym for posture - which it is not.
- As in previous series, there was some inaccurate use of language which limited the effectiveness of the responses for example ‘innocent’ was frequently used as a term for ‘naïve’. ‘Eye contact’ refers to contact between eyes, not gaze on an inanimate object or the ‘floor’.
- Historical reference, particularly for the roles of women, was often generalised or inaccurate. For example, ‘in the 1980s, women rarely had proper jobs or ‘careers’.
- Colour symbolism was sometimes stated but without justification, making the ideas overly simplistic. For example, ‘blue’ does not necessarily represent ‘purity’ to very many people.

## Section A

### *Antigone*

#### Q1

- This was a popular question, mostly answered from the perspective of a performer.
- It was surprising to examiners that some students appeared not to recognise or understand the meaning of the term ‘Catharsis’ and this lack of knowledge and understanding of a key critical term associated with Greek tragedy sometimes limited their achievement.
- Some students ignored the instruction to write about sections that occur **after** Haemon’s exit. Instead, they often wrote about the Prologue and/or about one or other of Antigone’s early confrontations with Creon. In earlier sections, the opportunity for contributing to catharsis is negligible, as well as being outside the scope of the question focus. These sections could attract no credit.
- A few students chose to write from a designer’s perspective and, surprisingly, some of these opted to answer as costume designers, where the potential for stimulating catharsis is also quite restricted.
- Whatever perspective was selected, only those students who noted that the question focus was to ‘achieve a cathartic experience for your audience’ offered ‘reasonable’ to ‘very good’ responses.

- A ‘sympathetic audience response’ does not necessarily indicate catharsis, which is usually defined as a purging or cleansing of emotion.
- Antigone’s suffering at the end of the play was generally well considered, and most students differentiated between her performance when interacting with the Chorus and her performance when interacting with Creon.
- Many students took advantage of the question’s precise focus to write in detail about Antigone’s performance and to support ideas that would certainly contribute to the audience’s experience of catharsis, using plentiful succinct quotations.

## Q2

- This was a popular question and attracted some very successful answers.
- There was evidence of good social, cultural and historical knowledge which was, for the most part, focused on the question.
- Most students showed a very secure understanding of the role of the Chorus.
- In better answers, students tended to begin by outlining the ‘main issues’ of the play. Some students cited conflict between the state and the individual, between human justice and divine laws, or they wrote about family obligations to the dead and to the living or, more generally, about themes of loyalty and betrayal.
- In less accomplished answers, there was little attempt to identify ‘main issues’.
- The best answers always used the text to support ideas and examiners reported seeing some very well supported work, this series, where answers really came to life through deft integration of pithy quotation.

***Much Ado about Nothing***

## Q3

- The most successful responses to this question, irrespective of whether adopting the viewpoint of a director or of a designer, were those that selected appropriate sections to write about. Better answers chose sections where both Beatrice and Hero are on stage at the same time.
- On numerous occasions, this was not the case, and Beatrice became the focus of the answer, displaying her quick wit in exchanges with Benedick in the early part of the play. Hero meanwhile was frequently presented as an afterthought, usually depicted in the first ‘wedding scene’ being downtrodden and miserable and ‘balling (sic) her eyes out’.
- Only in better answers were the ‘contrasting’ aspects of the characters foregrounded and, here, there were some astute observations about Shakespeare’s presentation of the stereotypical, obedient and subservient, Hero and her fiery, outspoken and more ‘liberated’ cousin, Beatrice. In these answers, students often selected the opening scene, where Beatrice and Hero are together, and one of the wedding scenes.
- These scenes also gave costume designers plenty of opportunities to differentiate between the cousins in terms of the style of their costumes, and sometimes the varying degree of ‘femininity’ to be discerned through choice of colours, fabrics, textures and levels of adornment. That being said, few students offered convincing justification for their assertions that Beatrice is presented as ‘masculine’ either in appearance or character.

- Transposition to contemporary times was occasionally successful, where choices were justified in terms of the contrasting characteristics of the cousins.
- Costume designers who had considered costumes for the cast of the play, as part of their preparation for the examination, obviously fared better than those who were designing for the first time, in the exam hall, and the distinction was made very clearly in the competence, or otherwise, of the sketches.

## Q4

- More students chose this option, on the creation of comedy through an interpretation of Dogberry, although few succeeded in offering genuinely ‘funny’ moments.
- Creation of comedy is not as straightforward as some students appeared to think it and some failed to appreciate that it takes more than a ‘silly walk’ or a ‘comical costume’ to achieve.
- Several students appeared to be relying upon costuming Dogberry in a ‘homemade uniform with an upside-down badge’ for laughs, without troubling themselves with details about the delivery of Dogberry’s lines.
- There were some successful answers focused on Dogberry’s civic pride and misplaced pomposity, his hectoring of his ‘fellow’ men in ‘the Watch’ and ludicrous attempts at familiarity with Leonato.
- Although there is scope for slapstick comedy in scenes where Dogberry appears, and much was offered in the way of ‘falling down’ and ‘bumping into things’, only in better answers did examiners see full exploitation of Dogberry’s misunderstanding and misapplication of the English language

***A Servant to Two Masters***

## Q5

- This was not a very popular question, as the majority of students opted to write about their favourite character, Truffaldino, in option 06.
- Those students who did select this option almost always selected to write from a director’s perspective and naturally they focused on the fast-paced action and comedy created by Truffaldino.
- Examiners have not reported seeing answers written from a designer’s perspective, although some inventive directors referred to aspects of design, for example, the use of ‘saloon style’ doors in the inn, or the inventive use of a gondola, in street scenes.
- As sometimes happens under examination conditions, some students confused the two questions - having possibly considered each option - and they wrote about directing Truffaldino to bring out ‘different aspects of his character’.

This resulted, in some instances, in a lack of focus on scenes that are especially remarkable for their ‘fast pace’, such as the serving of dinner to the ‘two masters’, in favour of Truffaldino’s relatively slow-paced first scene, where he flirts with Smeraldina and his other main scene with Smeraldina where their relationship blossoms.

- There were some genuinely funny and inventive responses seen, however, and examiners were often impressed with the degree of detail that students were able to supply about how to achieve both comedy and speed on stage. The best answers included examples offering a mixture of

‘knockabout humour’ and pacey delivery of lines to create ‘laugh-out-loud’ moments for the audience, and for the examiner concerned.

- As in previous series, several students prefaced their answers with over- lengthy introductions explaining Goldoni’s intentions and the historical background to the text, rather than focusing quickly on the question demands.

Q6

- This was a very popular question, and the full range of achievement was seen.
- In better answers, students began by identifying different aspects of Truffaldino’s character, such as his confidence, his capacity for deceit, his greed, his lust, his ‘romantic’ side, his enthusiasm and/or resilience.
- Weaker responses offered over-long introductions, offering detailed references to SCH which were not always question-focused, or which added little useful information.
- Some responses focused on Goldoni’s audience, rather than on a 21<sup>st</sup> century audience.
- Students typically selected two or three of Truffaldino’s characteristics and illustrated ways of demonstrating the chosen qualities in sections of interaction with Pantalone, Beatrice/Federigo, Smeraldina and/or the audience, in well-chosen moments from the play.
- Better answers considered both delivery of text and of action.
- In other answers, no reference was made to any aspect of character as the student was prepared to answer a question on Truffaldino’s creation of comedy and that was what their response focused on – thereby, forfeiting many opportunities to achieve credit.

### ***Hedda Gabler***

Q7

- This was the less popular of the two questions. Examiners reported seeing some very accomplished responses as well as some that were not well focused.
- The question required students to explore two separate sections of the play to highlight Hedda’s ‘cold and destructive nature’. With only two sections at their disposal, some students missed opportunities by selecting one, or even both sections from the early part of the play. They discussed Hedda’s refusal to look at Tesman’s slippers and some chose the sections where Hedda is aiming her gun at Brack in Act Two. These are not the best examples of Hedda’s cold and destructive nature, although, well-handled, as these sections sometimes were, and credit-worthy - especially if the second section was taken from later in the play where Hedda becomes almost manic in her determination to destroy the happiness of others.
- Some very good work was seen on Hedda’s burning of the manuscript, as well as in her manipulation of Loevborg, whom she coaxes to kill himself. Others offered precise details of Hedda’s unfeeling dealings with Aunt Juliana, although there are better examples of her coldness/destructiveness later in the play.
- Some students did not confine themselves to two sections and incurred rubric penalties in doing so, (ie only the two sections that were strongest could be credited).
- Several students appeared to have prepared an answer on Hedda that involved her ‘manipulative’ behaviour and they focused entirely on this without considering the ‘destructive’ element.

- There were too few answers where students opted to answer this question from the viewpoint of a designer to draw meaningful inferences.

## Q8

- The majority of students who had studied *Hedda Gabler* selected Q 08. The question has a specific focus and also allowed students to write about two or more separate sections to reveal Judge Brack’s ‘transformation’ from ‘flirtatious friend’ to ‘dangerous predator’.
- Some students did not focus on the specific terms of the question and offered a character sketch of Judge Brack with some performance detail.
- Some students appeared unaware of the social niceties of Nineteenth Century society and allowed Judge Brack the unlikely liberty of feeling able to touch Hedda’s knee and even her ‘inner thigh’ during the ‘flirtatious friend’ phase of the relationship in Act 2. These were inappropriate suggestions, unless a transposition to a contemporary or more liberal society had been indicated and justified by the student.
- A surprising number of students appeared confused about Judge Brack’s class, indeed about the class distinction in the play as a whole, and some based their interpretation of the intimacy between Hedda and Brack on an inaccurate understanding of class relations.
- Brack’s behaviour in his final scene was often taken to be violent, using examples, presumably influenced by Ivo van Hove’s production, of him pulling Hedda around by her hair and pouring drink over her without any apparent awareness of the fact that Thea and Tesman are upstage.
- In better answers, some genuine understanding of the social context informed all of the students’ practical choices; the idea of ‘flirtatiousness’ was understood as was the predatorial aspect of Brack’s dealings with Hedda in the final Act where Brack is blackmailing Hedda in return for his silence.

***Caucasian Chalk Circle***

## Q9

- Some strong answers were seen from well-prepared students with a good understanding of Brecht’s purpose in his creation of the role of the Governor’s Wife.
- Almost all of the students who opted for Q 09 answered this question from the perspective of a performer.
- It is not possible to draw meaningful inferences from the handful of costume design responses seen, except to remark on the apparent lack of preparation for a design question that appeared to have preceded the examination.
- Those very few students who attempted the question from the perspective of a costume designer frequently betrayed a misunderstanding of Brecht’s approach to costume design.
- As reported previously, some students hold the mistaken belief that Brecht was a ‘minimalist’ in terms of design values and that characters in Brecht’s productions – including the performer playing the role of the Governor’s Wife - wore ‘theatre blacks’ to perform in.
- In answers to questions on this play, students frequently attempt to display their knowledge of Brechtian theory, and often at the expense of answering the set questions. This phenomenon was

apparent in this series, with some students spending more than 50% of their answers discussing some key features of Brecht’s theatrical practices.

- There was significant evidence to suggest that some students’ grasp of Brechtian theory is not fully secure. A significant number of students appear not to understand the meaning of terms such as ‘Verfremdungseffekt’, ‘gestus’ and ‘Spass’ although these terms appeared frequently.
- In stronger answers, students offered performance ideas for Natella that emphasised her sense of entitlement as a member of the ruling class. They mentioned her extravagance and selfishness, her lack of empathy, her violent temper - which manifested itself both verbally and physically - her lack of social as well as emotional intelligence, and her role as a representative of a class considered redundant by socialist thinkers and writers such as Brecht.
- The most frequently chosen sections included her expression of satisfaction at the pulling down of the slums to build her garden, her violence towards her servants as they help her to pack and her appearance in court, culminating in the Chalk Circle test and its aftermath.
- Some students spent far too long considering competing styles of motherhood as exemplified in the Governor’s Wife and Grusha – an answer to a different question already planned, perhaps.
- Some students appeared to confuse the ‘ruling class’, as referred to in the question, with the ‘Bourgeoisie’. Swathes of students appeared to believe that Brecht was criticising the Bourgeoisie in this play and even that the Governor’s Wife is a member of the Bourgeoisie. This fundamental misunderstanding of the politics of the play was frequently a barrier to success. Further swathes of students appeared to believe that both the Lawyers and the Doctors, who appear in the play, represent the ‘proletariat’.

#### Q10

- There were very few answers to this question and even fewer where the students appeared to understand the characters that they had chosen to direct.
- Most showed a little understanding of Yussup and were therefore able to match a suitable intention to their presentation of the role. Many saw Aniko as a kind and comfortable sister-in-law to Grusha, misunderstood the viciousness of the Corporal altogether and saw his intimidation of Grusha as ‘a bit of fun/banter’. The Mother-in-law was rarely selected.
- Very occasionally, examiners reported seeing some quite lively and workable interpretations of Yussup and Aniko underpinned by a belief that Brecht’s intention with these characters was to suggest that viciousness, laziness and selfishness are not the province of the ruling-class alone, and such an approach was both valid and quite refreshing.
- Some students offered lengthy references to Brecht’s methodology without applying this in a focused and practical way. Ideas were often generalised, and students made unsupported assertions about dramatic effects.

### ***Accidental Death of an Anarchist***

#### Q11

- There were not a great many answers to this question, but they were invariably focused, appropriately, on directing the antics of the Maniac as he interacts with members of the Police, with Feletti and, sometimes, with the audience.

- The question required students to do two things through their direction: to facilitate the fast-paced action of the play and to create its ‘cartoon’ style. If students failed to address both of these aspects, it was difficult for them to achieve marks in the higher levels.
- The question also required students to write about **two** separate sections of the play. In a number of instances, examiners reported on students writing about more than two sections which resulted in only the two most successfully treated sections being credited.
- As in previous series, there were several responses seen where students focused upon the Maniac’s telephone conversation at the start of the play. While this is a comical moment, it is not very fast-paced, so it was difficult to award marks for pacey direction here.
- The most successful responses were very clear in the realisation of the frantic pace of the unfolding action, supported by a detailed knowledge of the way in which farcical action builds upon strategies such as increasingly exaggerated action and repetitive comic tropes.
- Some very inventive work was seen where students included details about the Maniac’s ever changing and increasingly bizarre ‘disguises’ including quick changes of costume and a proliferation of ‘artificial’ appendages such as wigs and moustaches in addition to false limbs and eye.

## Q12

- There were some good responses to this question.
- There was a reasonably developed understanding of Feletti’s role within the play and of the necessity for her to be performed in such a way as to create a ‘sensible’ foil to the manic activities unfolding all around her.
- Intended effects for the audience, where stated, ranged from shocking them about the institutional sexism in the Police Force to emphasising the extent of Police corruption.
- Some students attempted to make Feletti into a comical character in her own right– one or two suggested that the role be played by a male actor in obvious ‘drag’ – and, although such an approach was credit-worthy, these more unorthodox interpretations needed to be fully justified in terms of the stated ‘intended effects’ to be fully successful.
- There were often some clear details regarding the application of Feletti’s physical performance techniques but only a handful of responses offered detailed explanations of Feletti’s vocal qualities and her delivery of individual lines.
- Some students were keen to share costumes ideas for Felletti (especially when she was ‘in drag’) with most opting for a two-piece suit, with a pencil skirt; however, explanations of costume tended to be generalised with little sense as to how Feletti’s costume contributed to the students’ intended effects, if indeed, these effects had been established at the beginning of the answer.

**Jerusalem**

## Q13

- Although not the more popular option, there were some interesting responses to this question and students chose to answer from the perspective of a director in the vast majority of answers.
- As always, the more successful answers started with some explanation of the extremism of Johnny’s ‘alternative lifestyle’ alerting the examiner to their intentions to meet the demands of the question from the beginning.
- Less successful answers, especially among the few answers written from the perspective of a designer, rarely included the phrase ‘alternative lifestyle’, even when there appeared to be a reasonable level of understanding of Johnny’s domestic and ‘professional’ arrangements.

- Those students who adopted a directorial approach frequently spent quite a lot of time/space on casting and costume ideas to indicate the ‘alternative lifestyle’ choices of the ‘hangers-on’, those still clinging to their ‘mis-spent’ youth, as well as to Johnny’s own outlandish appearance and behaviour.
- Often students used only limited text to support their directorial ideas, where they were articulated, which inhibited the quality of their answers.
- Students who opted to answer the question from the perspective of a designer of set and costume were in the minority, but generally offered some ideas for costume with some focus on period as well as on ‘alternative’ styling.
- Some students offered complete copies of the set/costume from the recent Mark Rylance revival, offering scant justification and limited creativity of their own.
- Where students offered ideas for the set, sketches were generally included, and most were quite useful in supporting the written response. Students should be encouraged to practice their sketching skills as a routine part of the course, to give them the necessary confidence to produce a decent sketch under exam conditions.

#### Q14

- This was the less popular question on the play although a number of examples were seen, across a range of achievement.
- Phaedra has a few significant appearances through the play and most students were able to find sufficient material to support their personal interpretations of her character.
- Opinion was divided over Phaedra’s character with some seeing her as ‘mature beyond her years’ and others believing her to be a victim of exploitation.
- Some students viewed Phaedra as a completely ‘innocent child’ without offering much supporting evidence.
- Most answers contained some exploration of Phaedra’s reasons for hiding in Johnny’s caravan and they speculated about her relationships with Johnny and with Troy.
- Most students selected apt moments from the text to support their interpretation that were then explored practically.
- Some weaker answers offered unlikely interpretations of her performance of “Jerusalem”. The significance of the song was not fully considered, and the interpretations of her performance were fragmented and inappropriate.
- In some answers there was no attempt to interpret Phaedra’s character beyond physical description and some ideas for a variety of costumes. Some students referred to her as a ‘whimsical’ character with limited evidence to suggest that they understood the meaning of this description.

**Section B*****Yerma***

## Q15.1

- Most of the students responding to this question were successful in being able to identify that Yerma and Pagan Woman do have different attitudes towards ‘life’.
- Some students misread the question and answered on the difference in their attitudes towards motherhood – last year’s question - although some of the material included was relevant to the question on ‘life’ and was credit-worthy.
- In better answers, students revealed a good understanding of the philosophical divide between the serious Yerma and life-loving Pagan Woman which some attributed to religious differences as well as to social conditioning.
- In the most successful answers, students identified that Yerma’s view is formed by her upbringing and expectations, a victim of her culture as well as her biology, while the Pagan Woman appears to follow no rules beyond her biological urges.
- Some students included a comment on Yerma’s lack of feelings for her husband that had persuaded them to believe Juan to be the real victim of Yerma’s childlessness, and they compared Yerma’s ‘utilitarian’ approach to her husband with the Pagan Woman’s attitude towards men, generally, which tended towards ‘pleasure above purpose’.
- In some answers, students appeared to struggle to find adequate theatrical means to express the contrast.

## Q15.2

- Successful responses to this question focused on the demand of the question to achieve their preferred audience responses to Yerma, which were generally responses of sympathy, although some students intended the audience to be frustrated by Yerma’s inability to accept her fate.
- In weaker answers, the requirement to achieve a specific audience response was ignored in favour of writing about what the student wanted to show the audience. Answers that were focused on ‘showing’ the audience that Yerma is ‘desperate to have a baby’, for example, without explaining what audience response is intended, attracted limited credit.
- It is also worth noting that a fair number of students ignored the Question’s instruction to refer to the section between line 51 of the extract to its end. Students who wrote about the first part of the extract between the beginning and line 50, could not be credited for that part of their answer.

## Q15.3

- There were some good responses to the question, supported by detailed sketches. The setting of the section was, in these answers, well considered with suggestions for conveying both the setting and atmosphere.
- Some good answers suggested how lighting and set could convey the oppressive heat that reflects Yerma’s feelings of desperation. Suggestions included strong, amber floodlights and a dry yellow colour palette to suggest the burnt landscape.
- Good answers often included elements reflective of Lorca’s symbolism, for example the stream of water. Other suggestions included a dry, dead olive tree which Yerma is under, reflecting barrenness.
- In some quite inventive responses, there was evidence of limited understanding of the practical viability of their suggestions.

- Some answers focused on properties, rather than setting, for example Yerma’s basket, losing the focus of the question.

### ***The Glass Menagerie***

#### Q16.1

- The best answers to this question acknowledged the ‘off-stage’ nature of the exchange between Amanda and Jim, whether or not students chose to follow Tennessee Williams’ stage directions.
- In good answers, there was a discernible difference established between Amanda’s tone and physicality in her playful interactions with Jim and her tight-lipped, but superficially amiable, taunts at Tom.
- In weaker answers, Amanda was presented simply as a ‘Southern Belle,’ with limited elaboration and a limited range of potential directions for her character.
- Casting ideas were not invited, nor did they contribute much to the focus of the question when they were volunteered.
- A considerable number of answers were written from a performer’s perspective.
- There were some answers which offered some quite subtle directorial details that revealed an understanding of the complexities of Amanda’s feelings for Tom and her visceral need to secure the future of Laura.

#### Q16.2

- There was quite a range of interpretative ideas offered for Jim, which resulted in the identification of a similar range of potential audience responses to the character.
- As mentioned elsewhere in this report, students who failed to identify their preferred audience responses to Jim, substituting their interpretation of his character as the focus of their answers, attracted limited credit.
- A few students had not noted the prescribed lines for the question and started their answers earlier in the extract, offering points that could not be credited.
- Nevertheless, examiners reported seeing some excellent answers on Jim, although students were divided in their opinion of whether Jim was to be admired by the audience or censured for his fairly flirtatious interaction with the vulnerable Laura.

#### Q16.3

- There were some appropriate costume design ideas and most students appeared to understand that both Laura and Jim would be dressed quite formally.
- There was some misunderstanding of the cause of Laura’s ‘limp’ and of her tendency to be overly self-conscious about it. A sizeable number of students put Laura in a leg brace, or a built-up shoe and some even had her wearing a plaster cast. These ideas indicated a lack of understanding of her condition and certainly of what Amanda would have allowed Laura to be seen in, by her ‘Gentleman caller’.
- Well-prepared students were already ready with appropriate costume designs for the two characters based on an understanding of the period and the circumstances of both Laura and Jim and on the fact that the play is based on ‘memory’. Clearly labelled and clearly drawn

sketches were accompanied by cogent justifications of the chosen designs in terms of how appropriate the offered designs were for the characters ‘at this point in the play’.

- Scrappy sketches, ‘stick men’ or cartoon-like drawings were the features of designs offered by less well-prepared students.

### **Metamorphosis**

#### Q17.1

- This play continues to be very popular, but not all students demonstrated that they have enough theatrical experience to be able to interpret Berkoff’s style of theatre.
- The best responses started with a clear statement of dramatic intentions for the prescribed lines of the extract.
- Weaker responses failed to identify their intentions, leading to fairly purposeless ‘direction’ of the actors.
- Some students failed to notice that the question was focused on directing the actors, ie ‘your cast’ and answered the question as if all staging ideas, including those for set/costume/lighting were acceptable, thus forfeiting the opportunity to attract credit for the directing of the performers – the question focus.
- Other students failed to notice that the nominated lines for Question 1 are from ‘line 33 to line 62’ and they offered ideas for directing moments outside the prescribed section which could not be credited.
- In better responses, students identified their intended effects, for example, they suggested that their ideas might help to create sympathy for Gregor or repulsion at Mr Samsa’s new smugness, or concern for Mrs Samsa and Greta; others wrote about creating a surreal atmosphere through the precise direction of the actors.
- Many answers only dealt with a small part of the section or selected examples of text that were unlikely to create specific effects.

#### Q17.2

- Most answers managed some focus on Mrs Samsa’s maternal feelings for Gregor but very little of the text was used to support the answer.
- Some answers relied on the stage directions for Mrs Samsa and appeared unable to devise effective performance strategies of their own.
- Some other answers, as mentioned in previous reports, focused too much on the notion of Total Theatre rather than focusing on Mrs Samsa’s performance
- Some answers were very brief and explored limited references to the extract.

#### Q17.3

- The most common design choices were for the set. But some students did offer some interesting ideas for lighting and sound which were entirely in keeping with Berkoff’s style.
- Many students failed to offer any sense of the configuration of the stage space, which made it very difficult to visualise the action. Some students failed to provide a sketch but referred loosely to the ‘stools’, the ‘cyc’ or ‘Gregor’s cage’.
- Sketches varied greatly in their quality, and it was often impossible for examiners to work out the spatial relationship between the various ‘items’ of furniture that were included.

- Some answers relied solely on the stage directions, making it difficult for examiners to find much invention to credit.

### ***Our Country's Good***

#### Q18.1

- As in previous series, some students' responses to this question were outweighed by factual information about the genesis of the play and its historical context.
- Some students reveal a poor grasp of political realities when discussing Margaret Thatcher's 'rule' which took place, according to a number of students this series, in the late eighteenth century.
- The most common reason for students' underachievement in Q 1 was, as so frequently seen, a lack of focus on the question which required them to direct the section from line 37 to the end of the extract. Large numbers of students started at the beginning of the extract offering material that could not be credited.
- Preferred effects were only occasionally identified at the beginning of the answer, but some students did this and suggested a range of potential effects including comedy and shock for the audience at some of the disturbing facts that are revealed about life as a convict.

#### Q18.2

- Some students showed a good understanding of Dabby's character. An 'interpretation' of her character was required by the question – only in better answers was a clear interpretation discernible amongst the various descriptive details about her actions.
- Good answers recognised Dabby's 'neediness' beneath the surface veneer of toughness. They noted her jealousy of Mary's attention to Liz as well as her self-assurance in her judgements of others.
- Some students revealed limited understanding of Dabby's character, mistaking her claims to be protective of Mary for the real thing.

#### Q18.3

- There were some good answers to this question. However, in many instances, examiners were presented with a set of very poor sketches, which were inadequately labelled, from students who appeared to believe that any style of presentation would be acceptable.
- Although not all students have innate 'artistic' ability, it is considered reasonable to expect, at A Level, in a paper that includes a compulsory question requiring a sketch, that students will have been trained to produce clearly labelled, appropriately sized and clear sketches.
- Examiners reported sketches that were too small, too smudged, too 'cartoon-like' to convey much information.
- Some students failed to produce sketches for Liz or Ketch and also offered inadequate detail in their written description of their favoured costumes to convey information about the period/style of their 'designs'. This resulted in examiners being faced with suggestions such as 'Liz will wear a torn skirt' or 'Ketch's trousers will be muddied'. While examiners are able to visualise 'torn' and 'muddied' they are not able to visualise the detail of the skirt/trousers that make them appropriate to the characters and action at this point, in this play, set in the late eighteenth century.

- A significant number of students appeared to believe that Ketch is one of the officers.

### **Cloud Nine**

#### Q19.1

- There were not many responses on this play in this series.
- Question 1 was not answered very well. Students appeared not to have considered Churchill's message about gender/sexuality in their preparation for the examination. Some relevant reference was made to Betty's receptiveness to 'new' norms in sexual behaviour. There was very little attempt to discuss the attitudes of Cathy or Gerry to emerging changes in attitude.
- Some answers focused on Churchill's use of stereotypes and included casting ideas which were superficial, particularly for Lin. Unfortunately, some of these answers did not progress to targeted direction and so did not address Churchill's intentions.

#### Q19.2

- This was another question which required students to offer their preferred audience response, this time to Betty. Although, as mentioned previously, some students failed to identify their preferred response(s), those who did tended to seek understanding and respect for Betty's ability to adapt to shifting mores.
- Weaker answers showed insecurity in their interpretation of Betty and the context of the extract within the play as a whole.
- A number of answers were very brief and explored only a small proportion of the specified section of text.
- Some answers showed an insecure understanding of Betty's relationship with Gerry, leading to some unlikely performance ideas. This suggested a lack of understanding of the play as a whole.

#### Q19.3

- Much of what has already said about sketches in response to costume design questions, elsewhere in this report, applies equally here, and some of these comments are repeated below for convenience.
- Although not all students have innate 'artistic' ability, it is considered reasonable to expect, at A Level, in a paper that includes a compulsory question requiring a sketch, that students will have been trained to produce clearly labelled, appropriately sized and clear sketches.
- Examiners reported sketches that were too small, too smudged, too 'cartoon-like' to convey much information.
- Sketches cannot replace textual commentary, but neither is textual commentary - unless very detailed indeed - a substitute for a sketch. A sketch which may convey the student's knowledge of period and of the stylistic features typical of the specific period setting, which are not conveyed by a mere reference to 'a long/short skirt' or 'grey trousers'.

**Bronte**

- This was not an especially popular text but there were some very secure and detailed answers, showing some genuine enthusiasm for the play.
- It was disappointing to see, as last year, instances where all of the students in the cohort offered very similar, if not identical, sketches and very similar justifications for their design ideas. It does not help students to discourage their individual design ideas and/or to impose or sanction a ‘class’ response.

## Q20.1

- Most students offered reasonable answers to this question, although not all were focused on the question requirement to discuss the attitudes demonstrated by the Bronte sisters to Branwell’s drunken return to the house, to his disorderly behaviour towards all of them and his sickening and violent behaviour towards Charlotte.
- In some answers no attitudes were discussed.
- Better answers differentiated between the attitudes of Emily, Anne and Charlotte towards their brother; in other answers, the sisters were all dealt with as a single entity and were all ‘shocked’.
- Some students ignored Emily, presumably because she has no text in this section, but direction is still required for her.
- Several students failed to notice that the stipulated lines ended at line 79 and they included the section with Patrick as well as the one with Charlotte at the end of the extract. This work attracted no credit.

## Q20.2

- There were some good answers on the character of Branwell with stronger answers coming from students who had noticed that a ‘preferred audience response’ to the character was the required focus of the question. A significant number of students failed to note the terms of the question and simply offered their interpretation of Branwell.
- In more subtle answers, students offered a range of valid negative responses to Branwell in his exchanges with the sisters before attempting to elicit some sympathy for his feelings of failure and for his remorse as expressed at the end of the extract in his exchange with Charlotte.
- Students often referred to Branwell’s attempt to make himself presentable in front of his father; tucking in his shirt and smoothing his hair for example, as per the stage directions.

## Q20.3

- Much of what has already said about sketches in response to costume design questions, elsewhere in this report, applies equally here, and some of these comments are repeated below for convenience.
- Although not all students have innate ‘artistic’ ability, it is considered reasonable to expect, at A Level, in a paper that includes a compulsory question requiring a sketch, that students will have been trained to produce clearly labelled, appropriately sized and clear sketches.
- Examiners reported sketches that were too small, too smudged, too ‘cartoon-like’ to convey much information.
- Sketches cannot replace textual commentary, but neither is textual commentary - unless very detailed indeed - a substitute for a sketch. A sketch is able to convey the student’s knowledge of

period and of the stylistic features typical of the specific period setting, in a way that cannot be conveyed by a mere reference to ‘a long/short skirt’ or ‘grey trousers’.

- Following on from comments made in last year’s report and given the abundance of ‘historical’ material available both in books and online, it was disappointing to see – again- how few students actually understood the living conditions of the Bronte family and their respectable position in their community.
- Numerous students described the Brontes as living ‘in poverty’, none acknowledged that the Bronte family had servants and that therefore to present Charlotte with a mop as an ‘accessory’ was not appropriate. The Bronte sisters were regularly depicted, in student answers, trailing around in ‘hand-me-downs’ that were ‘patched’, and usually patched rather crudely, and in a contrasting colour to the original garment.
- In better answers, students appeared to have a reasonable grasp of the Victorian style, in their costume designs and referred to, or reflected in their sketches, the correct shape and fit of the dresses, and the cut and style of Branwell’s trousers but it was surprising to note that a few designs showed the sisters in short frocks.
- There were few suggestions for Patrick or Bramwell. Patrick is described in the extract as being in his ‘dressing gown’ but students often had him in full outdoor regalia, including, in one or two answers, a top hat.
- Some students **did** offer clear sketches, and these were well-labelled.

### **Three Sisters**

Very few answers were seen on this new text, and it is difficult to draw meaningful inferences from such a small number of students’ work.

- There was evidence that the students who did write about *Three Sisters* had watched the National Theatre production of the play, and this production clearly informed their ideas, especially in Q 21.3.

#### Q21.1

- Students offered some reasonable understanding of the relationship between Dimgba and his sisters. Reference was made to the way that the sisters patronise him, despite his learning, and some mentioned that they ‘pet’ him.
- There was mention made of the sisters’ pride in Dimgba’s many ‘talents’ and, in turn, of Dimgba’s teasing of Lolo when he reveals to Ikemba that Lolo had had a ‘crush’ on him when she was younger.
- Some better direction was offered for showing the sisters’ attitudes to Dimgba’s relationship with Aboosed. Directorial invention was not especially well-developed, in the few answers seen.

#### Q21.2

- Students’ who wrote about Ikemba tended to interpret him as quite a serious man, even though he appears to be jovial in the given extract.
- They wrote about his polite and rather charming interaction with the sisters, whom he clearly remembers.
- Some students noted his confusion when presented with the sisters’ seemingly over-enthusiastic praise for Dimgba’s handiwork, suggesting that Ikemba is quite a pragmatic, unsentimental, character.
- Some students strayed into later events of the play, and this coloured their view of Ikemba, the question asks for an interpretation of him ‘at this point in the play’.

## Q21.3

- Students either followed the stage directions in their costume suggestions, or they replicated exactly what they had seen in the National Theatre production.
- Udo is described as being dressed for her birthday celebration – the stage directions suggest that she wears ‘green’. Students often described exactly what Udo had worn in the production seen with no variation or embellishment.
- Onyinyechukwu’s costume is not described in the text, but students once again described his appearance in the production that they had seen. Some mentioned that he carries balloons.
- There was very limited reference to design fundamentals and the fabric, texture, shape, and ornamentation were rarely alluded to.
- Sketches, where offered, tended to be short on detailed labelling.

***The Convert***

Very few students appear to have studied this play and these comments are based on the work of a comparatively small number of students. However, it is very pleasing to see teachers exploring this new set text with their students and there was evidence of a good degree of engagement with the themes and characters.

## Q22.1

- Students identified a few potential effects that might be created through their direction. These included shock at Chancellor’s wounded head and at the dreadful retelling of Father Helm’s murder. Other effects included sympathy for Chilford’s grief while some sought to create amusement at Mai Tamba’s exaggerated ‘wailing’.
- Some students omitted to identify any effects at all, which rendered their practical suggestions somewhat purposeless.
- While some students focused almost entirely on Chilford; in better answers, directions were offered for his interactions with others.
- Weaker answers were descriptive, and did not fully engage with the theatrical opportunities offered by the extract
- There was some reference to context, but this tended towards a generic response rather than indicating how ‘colonisation’ or ‘the imposition of one religion upon another’ affected this particular section.

## Q22.2

- Answers to this question were reasonably successful with most students able to recognise some elements of Mai Tamba’s character.
- Better answers outlined quite a coherent interpretation of Mai Tamba; in particular, noting her earnest defiance directed towards Chilford and/or her protective qualities in relation to Esther. Many referred to her as a proud and strong female.
- Most students used the text reasonably well to support their ideas and there was some useful context offered for Mai Tamba, whom students appear to have enjoyed, as a character. Even in weaker answers, students revealed some understanding and enthusiasm for the role.

## Q22.3

- In several instances, answers to this question were the most successful. There were some clear sketches that had appropriately detailed annotations that demonstrated a good understanding of Chilford’s obsession with 19<sup>th</sup> Century England and ‘Englishness’.

- The best responses provided clear explanations of some of the design fundamentals of chairs, tables and a chaise-longue that demonstrated secure knowledge of period.
- There were suggestions for threadbare upholstery, as well as references to an abundance of Christian iconography, both large and small, which decorated the setting.
- Explanations of the positioning of and use of props, which were supported by textual references, also provided an insight into Chilford’s reverence for ‘Christian’ households.

### Section C

As in previous series, there were quite a lot of answers where students chose an inappropriate question for the production that they were determined to write about.

It was sometimes apparent, by looking at the responses across the Centre, that students had only been prepared to answer on a single production, and they were therefore at a disadvantage in terms of choice.

Even in Centres where students answered on different productions, it appeared that students’ experience of theatre did not include a single live production and they were thus reliant upon their experience of ‘theatre’, in the two dimensions offered by streamed versions, with which to approach their chosen questions

While it is entirely acceptable to prepare students for Section C using exclusively streamed productions, it should not be considered as an ideal foundation for any future study of theatre arts, nor does such an approach offer students the kind of experience of ‘performance’ to impact positively on their own practical work for Components 2 or 3.

#### Q23

This was not a popular question but attracted some strong and detailed answers.

The productions that featured most frequently in answer to this question were: *Frankenstein*, *Woman in Black* and *Jane Eyre*.

- The majority of students who selected this question selected appropriate productions and had clear focus on ‘impact’.
- In the best responses, students set the context of the moment being evaluated, explained the mood in relation to the action on stage, and then described, in some detail, the effects being created and their impact.
- There were some excellent answers on the work of Complicite, including the performance of *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*, discussing how lighting and sound created moments of shock and horror as the narrative unfolded. Similarly, there were excellent examples based on *Small Island* where, for example, the impact of a hurricane was vividly realised using lighting and sound.
- Some students had clearly drawn on their own skills and interests and were able to describe the impact of the sound design with some assured use of technical terminology. Similarly, there was good use of technical terms for lighting, with confident references to types of lanterns, gobos and effects. Weaker answers did not show this facility and answers were not specific or were unclear.

- Very few students included sketches in response to this question and whilst not as essential as for other design elements, a sketch showing the positioning of lanterns, speakers and or the location of live bands was always helpful.
- Most commonly, students failed to recognise that the question called for focus on lighting and sound used ‘in combination’ and therefore an explanation of the lighting at one point and the sound at a completely different point, failed to attract much credit.
- Similarly, it was necessary to explore exactly what the dramatic impact was for the audience – responses to *Woman in Black* often produced some excellent examples of ‘impact’ with clear explanations as to the ‘shock or scare’ factor. There were some highly detailed accounts where students had clearly recognised how the lighting and sound was highly influential in creating the dramatic impact needed for this particular production and indeed how its style was often dictated by the clever use of lighting and sound. Moments such as the train journey and the graveyard scene were well evoked.
- Few answers considered the use of live sound and those that did often failed to provide enough explanation as to how they created dramatic impact. Some responses to *Jane Eyre* took moments such as the repeated journeys and described the way that the actors worked with the on-stage band, but then failed to recognise any significance that the lighting might have played to the moment.
- Some answers focused on Musical Theatre with varied success. Some answers put too much focus on singing, for example the ‘School Song’ in the RSC’s *Matilda* was considered for its creation of impact and atmosphere but, as in the example above, the contribution of the lighting at this point received limited attention.
- Several students were clearly unprepared to answer on one or other of these designs, in which case the answers became very unbalanced both in terms of the amount of explanation of either lighting or sound or in terms of the use of specialist terminology associated with one or the other.
- In relation to an explanation of TDE, most students were able to link their recognition of dramatic impact to an element related to their wider appreciation of the play’s themes or issues. This was most often observed in *Frankenstein*.

#### Q24

This question was a minority choice, but it attracted some very good answers.

Most commonly answered on: *Frankenstein, A Monster Calls, Yerma*

- Good answers were supported by clear and detailed sketches which suggested thorough preparation for the paper. The sketches were clearly labelled and enabled examiners to visualise the performance space.
- As is always the case, answers to set design questions require students to have a design vocabulary. Without close description of the design fundamentals of scale, shape, colour, texture, there was rarely any evidence of understanding of the design.
- There were some good answers on The Paper Birds production of *Thirsty* where students explored how the set supported the multiple locations in the production and how the action of the piece was supported, for example by using a toilet stall on trucks to support the actor portraying drunkenness. There were also some very successful answers on Frantic Assembly’s production of *Othello* which referenced the use of the multi-purpose set in detail with particularly acute analysis of how the central pool table supported both the initial tender love sequence and its later tragic climax.
- Some less successful answers failed to describe the set clearly. For example, some answers on *Come From Away* noted the simple setting and how chairs were used to create multiple settings

such as an airport or a café, but how this supported the pace of the production and was a significant factor in its style, was not realised. The support the setting gave to the actors was not fully considered.

- Similarly, without some explanation of overall style it is very difficult to recognise what the student was experiencing. For example, many answers to *Yerma* failed to acknowledge the ‘glass box’ and the audience in traverse.
- Some answers described the set but failed to acknowledge how it supported the action, whilst some went into considerable detail about the action without paying enough attention to the design. For example, there were many examples where the design of the ‘monster’ in *A Monster Calls* was under-explained resulting in confusing answers that relied very heavily on the examiners’ prior knowledge – something that is so often the case in weaker responses.
- As in previous series, some students selected productions which they found hard to describe, suggesting a lack of preparation. As last year, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* was taxing for some students to explain. Similarly, some found explaining the set of *Frankenstein* a challenge and failed adequately to realise the changing settings, for example the joyful scene outdoors in the rain, contrasting the foreboding of the icy wasteland at the end of the play, and how these settings supported the action, in each case.
- Explanations of why the set was interesting or imaginative were often omitted – even when it clearly was: for example, the womb structure or the train as used in *Frankenstein*.
- In other cases, it was apparent that the production selected was wholly inappropriate for this question, Splendid theatre’s use of rope to define the performance space can hardly be considered imaginative or interesting.
- Some answers to this question lost focus and considered the effect of lighting on the set rather than the way it supported the action.
- All too often, explanations of TDE had little to do with the design and more to do with the narrative of the moments being discussed.

#### Q25

This was not a particularly popular choice. Some students answered very well, however.

Most commonly answered on: Splendid Theatre’s productions, *Woman in Black* and *Hamilton*

- A few students misunderstood the question and wrote about the different aspects that a character exhibited at different moments
- Better answers offered clear explanations of the character(s) being played, discussed the vocal and physical qualities that made for success and then moved on to how the performer changed those qualities to create completely different character(s). If the student offered clear context for the characters in their chosen moments, this was very useful in helping the examiner to recognise the differences that were highlighted.
- Some answers failed to give any indication as to the style of the production which again made it difficult to recognise whether the performance skills being discussed contributed to the creation of a naturalistic or non-naturalistic characterisation This was particularly evident in many responses that used Splendid Theatre productions.
- As with all Section C answers, the choice of production was key. There was some good work seen, for example in *Hamilton*, where Lemuel played both Lafayette and Thomas Jefferson. A few very good answers were seen that commented on the performance skills and offered specific examples.
- Some students had misinterpreted the question and had answered on Tom Basden’s recent adaptation of *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* where the Maniac *disguises* himself as other

characters. His described “winking at the audience” was a clear indicator that the actor was playing one character. Another similarly confused student wrote about Captain Absolute in a production of *The Rivals* ‘multi-roling’ as ‘Beverley’.

- Students often struggled to identify and analyse performance skills. This limitation was put under a spotlight in answers to this question, which required discussion of multi-role play with clear definition between characters.
- Many students failed to recognise the different elements required by this question ie to provide an explanation of each character, discuss the skills involved in creating the character and then assess this in relation to TDE.
- Many responses, whilst addressing TDE, only considered the function of the character in relation to this, without recognising it was the contribution of the multi-rolling skills to TDE that was being asked for.
- Weaker responses simply identified an actor and provided a narrative account of the different roles they played, sometimes considering the differences but without any explanations as to their performance skills.
- In some instances, for example from *Jane Eyre*, where actor Felix Hayes plays both Jane’s bullying cousin and Mr Rochester, the differences between the characters were given in narrative terms, but the differences in the use of performance skills was not developed.

#### Q26

This was the most popular choice of question in this section and examiners reported seeing a full range of outcomes.

Most commonly answered on: *Yerma*, *Streetcar*, Frantic Assembly’s *Othello*, *View from the Bridge*, *Jane Eyre*, *Love Song*

- There were many detailed and focused responses that revealed a good understanding of the requirements of the question.
- Some students did not appreciate that the question’s demand for a focus on movement and physical skills was just as easily answered in relation to naturalistic performances as it was to plays performed in a ‘physical’ theatre style.
- Those students who understood that ‘movement and physical skills’ are involved in every actor’s performance, irrespective of the style of the play, fared better than those who focused only on quasi-acrobatic physical feats such as those seen in productions from, for example, Frantic Assembly or *Complicite*.
- That having been said there were some excellent answers on *Curious Incident*, on *Things I know to be True*, Frantic’s *Othello* and to Abi Morgan’s *Lovesong*, where students referred to the changes in atmosphere created by the movement and physical skills shown by the older and younger versions of the characters.
- Better responses were securely focused on changing atmospheres and how these were created by the performers’ use of physical skills and movement. These answers clearly demonstrated the moment of ‘change’ as well as what the atmosphere had changed ‘from’ and ‘to’.
- Weaker answers had an insecure focus on the question demands, sometimes failed to refer to atmosphere at all and included references to atmosphere changes which were created principally by the performers’ vocal skills or by technical effects.

- Good examples linked changing atmosphere to TDE and included reference to the production aims. There was evidence of personal response, couched in appropriate terms.
- As is always the case with performance-based questions, the development of an extensive vocabulary that brings the performers' actions to life, significantly helped to evoke, for the examiner, the moment being discussed.
- Most students recognised the requirement to consider two or more performers. There were good examples given from *Small Island* particularly contrasting the vibrancy of Jamaica, contrasting the depressing atmosphere of life in post-war London and how the performers used their skills to express this change.
- Some students appeared not to understand what is meant by 'atmosphere' on stage, while better prepared students identified changes between tension or suspense and its release; they considered a romantic or erotic atmospheres being broken or interrupted; they wrote about positive or optimistic atmosphere's being changed to a sense of hopelessness or misery, they spoke of happiness being cut off by a sense of danger.
- Some answers considered the atmosphere in the audience at a particular moment rather than the atmosphere on stage. Or they wrote about how they felt watching the performer move or express themselves physically.
- Some of the best responses took very naturalistic moments but considered precisely how the performers' physical and movement characteristics affected the atmosphere on stage. For example, there were some very detailed accounts of Stanley Kowalski's brutality towards both Stella and Blanche at separate moments from the production, contrasted with Stanley's portrayal of a 'wounded animal' on the steps of the apartment.
- Others did focus on 'physical theatre' productions and some excellent work was seen on Frantic Assembly's *Othello*.
- Another very popular production, *Things I Know To Be True*, produced some perceptive responses including some that dealt with a moment of marital happiness – atmosphere of contentment – that was destroyed by the revelation of the wife's infidelity. The physical skills used by the actor playing the betrayed husband, of blank then troubled facial expression, repressed movement and complete lack of animation followed by a dramatic turn away from his wife showed the sudden devastation he felt and brought about a change in atmosphere on stage from happiness to despair.
- Many weaker answers included equal or more attention to vocal qualities than to physical ones.
- Explanations of 'skills' was sometimes lacking although many students did consider such elements as eye-contact, spatial relationships, and physical contact.
- There were some good references to TDE where answers clearly tied this element to the style and aims of either the whole production or to the way in which the moment being considered contributed to this. In some cases, there was no reference whatsoever to TDE.
- Personal evaluation was at its most purposeful when the skills being discussed were linked clearly to the change in atmosphere and the student was able to consider how the performers' movements and/or actions (or inaction) on stage had effected this change.

**Question Paper Note**

- On the exam paper instructions on the front cover, mention of the restricted combinations (answering on both Jerusalem and either of the two newly added plays, The Convert and Three Sisters) was omitted in error.
- After checking all scripts, no students used the restricted combinations and so no mitigation was required.
- This instruction has been added for the uploaded version of the June 2024 paper on the AQA website, and on all future papers for 7262/W.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.