

CCEA GCSE - Drama  
(Summer Series) 2015

# Chief Examiner's and Principal Moderator's Report

drama



## Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of CCEA's General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in Drama for this series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's microsite on our website at [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk)



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## GCSE DRAMA

### Chief Examiner's Report

#### Paper 1

#### Understanding Drama

Candidates responded very well to this year's paper and it was evident from the feedback of all the examining team that they had been well prepared to answer all questions on the examination. Papers had more quality than quantity this year and there were fewer 'limited responses'. Responses showed a high level of engagement with the set texts and the scripted texts which they had performed.

Again there is an issue with some candidates not finishing the paper or rushing the last question. This often was the case for top level candidates who answered the questions in a different order.

A number of students misread Mr Lyons for Mrs Lyons in 'Blood Brothers'. This was more an error of misreading by the candidates and allowances have been made by the marking team.

It was also the case with Mr Jackson and Mrs Jackson in 'Across the Barricades'.

#### Comments on Individual Questions

**Q1** This question was generally answered well with most candidates scoring in the top two bands. The element most often missing was 'perceptive detail' which is required in the top band. The correct period is still sometimes an issue and also the inclusion of an appropriate quotation 'with detailed comment'. The text reference must be from the chosen context and must have some element of influence on the costume. Also, candidates do need to include material, shape and colour in their answers. Candidates are writing closer to 100 words for justification.

**Q2** All candidates were able to attempt this question. Many referred very well to the text. There were some excellent answers this year which were coherent, detailed and original. Where candidates did not reach their potential, it was usually in the section on how the rehearsal work would help develop aspects of their performance.

Some centres are now using formulaic answers with candidates and although guidance for candidates is advised to help structure a good answer, some teachers are omitting advice on including detailed application. Candidates need to choose two contrasting moments of the text which they find challenging in performance. Two detailed rehearsal ideas need to be conveyed to the examiner which are original and helpful to the candidate in performing a character. Improvisation work and a second rehearsal idea, need to be well developed in structure and ideally with clear examples of original text or ideas being explored. Some answers still focus too much on the story and detail of the character which should be kept to an absolute minimum. There is also a question of balance with some answers tending to develop the application detail rather than keeping the focus on rehearsal. This is a rehearsal question; some candidates are using a range of moments rather than 'one chosen moment'.

The main part of the answer should be concerned with developing rehearsal work. Some candidates are writing very short rehearsal ideas and then finding very extended application work which is not warranted. It is also key that candidates make sure that the chosen moment and quotation identified is clearly referred to in the application.

- Q3**
- (a) All candidates were able to answer this question and good teaching practice was evident in many centres. Some candidates are still giving too much background detail about the play and some are adding information about seeing other productions of the play which is not required. Candidates need to select the information which most applies to their performance. Many candidates had personalised this question to suit their character which was excellent. However, information on style and staging was often simplistic, vague or lacking detail.
- (b) This question was generally answered well but there is still an issue with teachers choosing multiple-role texts which does not give candidates enough opportunity to develop one role. The text chosen for each group must give **all** candidates the opportunity to experience a range of movement. Movement is always more of a challenge for candidates and this year some candidates did lapse into talking about facial expressions and voice. Also, some candidates tended to be descriptive about their movements rather than try to reason why they had used it in a particular way. It is also very gratifying and rewarding for examiners to read about performances of new plays.

## Readability of the paper

The level of language used in the examination was appropriate for all candidates.

## Mark Schemes

The mark schemes again this year are straightforward and easy to follow with clear differentiation between the bands. It is worth noting again that Question 2 is worth half of the total marks for the paper and the mark bands are therefore very broad. This may need to be reviewed in the future.

## Time Allowance

The time allowed seems sufficient to allow all candidates to complete the paper although we do expect 'detailed' and 'comprehensive' responses. However this year there seemed to be fewer lengthy papers and yet many candidates received full marks. Again, candidates are advised to answer the questions in the order of the paper.

# Principal Moderator's Report

## Paper 2

## Drama Performance

Once again the team of moderators were pleased with the moderation process for this year and would like to offer their congratulations to all the pupils and their teachers.

Overall standards at moderation were good and there was clear evidence of thorough preparation, performance and appraisal. Assessment criteria were applied appropriately for the most part and centre adjustments for lenient marking were down slightly on last year, which was encouraging. There were also two centres adjusted as a result of overly severe marking. Centres are strongly advised to ensure they are fully aware of the requirements of the marking criteria and that the criteria are accurately applied when assessing the work of students.

The range of texts explored in the Scripted Unit was very extensive with a broad spectrum of theatrical style and genre represented in the creative choices of centres. The range included texts from the Shakespearean classics to more contemporary choices with an impressive range of new texts on offer this year. There was less evidence of texts of an unpublished nature, of unsourced internet material and of screenplays. Centres are to be reminded that texts chosen for performance must be published and have an ISBN reference number.

The most popular choices this year were *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Be My Baby*, *Living with Lady Macbeth* and *The Government Inspector*. Most text choices were well suited to the candidates and those who presented challenging texts rose to the challenge for the most part. There was some evidence this year of a few large centres compiling performance groups with a small number of candidates. This resulted in an overlong moderation session which was difficult to complete in the time allocated to the moderation process. Centres should consider the time allocation for moderation and present sample work which meets that time frame.

## Assessment

In general, the assessment criteria for Assessment Objective 2 and Assessment Objective 3 are being applied accurately at the majority of centres. It was noted, however, in a significant minority of centres that marking tended to be lenient but within tolerance. It was also noted that marking for Assessment Objective 1, which is not moderated, was also very lenient in a significant number of centres. The Assessment Objective 1 marks should reflect the marking in Assessment Objective 2 and Assessment Objective 3.

When marking beyond tolerance occurred on the day of moderation, the appropriate adjustments were made at the post moderation meeting. This beyond tolerance marking mostly applied to the top range of marks and were awarded to performances, or more often, appraisals which were not of this standard. It should be noted that marking in this range should be awarded as a result of the evidence of accomplished work.

**Marking on the day of external moderation must reflect the marks awarded at internal moderation.** Adjustments may be considered if this is not the case.

The notification of adjustment is indicated in the TAC6 report and centres should take note of issues identified. It is the expectation of the team that these issues will be addressed by the relevant centres for next year's moderation.

## Administration

Moderators reported that contact with centres prior to the moderation day had been very positive and this communication helped to ensure that the process ran smoothly. We appreciated the courtesy afforded to us by the centres during this initial contact period.

Administration was completed accurately in the vast majority of centres and all paperwork was presented to a good standard. In a few centres the level of detail proved to be exemplary.

Generally the venues for the performances were well suited to the process of moderation. The moderators commented on the very conducive atmosphere which was evident at a large number of centres. Less centres presented the appraisals to an audience and nearly all centres conducted this session in a smaller more private space.

Candidates at all centres were easily identified with most teachers either labelling candidates or providing photographs of the groups in character costume.

## Candidate Notebook

Evidence of engagement in units of coursework is contained in the candidate notebooks and these are ***required to be completed for all candidates and for all units***. Candidates are expected to show evidence in their notebook of their research in terms of the chosen script with consideration given to the style and period of their performances. It is also a requirement to include a discrete section for each of the two units of coursework.

Some centres chose to set out notebooks in an adjoining room for inspection before or after the performance. This worked well and allowed time for the notebooks to be considered.

There were less issues this year with notebooks overall. They continue to reach an acceptable standard, however, there is still a very varied approach to their completion. There was clear evidence of some very detailed research of the play and playwright which no doubt assisted the candidates in their answers to question three on the written paper. There were very few missing notebooks this year with nearly all candidates presenting their work for the day of moderation. The centres where notebooks were missing were instructed to forward these to CCEA for inspection by the senior team at post moderation.

## Standard of Presentation

Once again the drama performances were generally of a good standard with some very good, excellent and impressive work in evidence. All centres presented **scripted performance** this year for moderation. There were just over seventy texts in total offered in performance with twelve new texts presented for moderation.

Effective use was made, at a considerable number of centres, of design elements including set, costume and digital technologies.

Most of the texts proved suitable material for exploration and some new texts presented interesting new and creative challenges for candidates. Choices were, in the main, suited to the ability of candidates. Moderators reported that audiences added to the sense of occasion and helped to create the desired atmosphere for the performers.

The candidates in general were well engaged and there was very little evidence of underprepared performance work. There were, however, several issues this year in terms of work which was too short or overlong. The specification indicates a **minimum of fifteen minutes for a group of three and thirty minutes for a maximum group of nine**. It was noted that candidates were disadvantaged when the presentations were too short or over long.

In most centres the full range of marks was in evidence and a sample of top and bottom candidates was shown for moderation. However, again this year, there were several instances where the bottom candidates were not presented for moderation. If, for some valid reason, the bottom candidate is not available for moderation then the visiting moderator should be informed prior to the visit in order that the matter can be given full consideration and other arrangements put in place. The bottom candidate is the student with the **overall lowest mark** as appears on the TAC1 form.

In the vast majority of centres, internal moderation had been effectively carried out and centres are to be reminded that adjustments are applied to all students and not just one teaching group.

Teachers are also to be reminded that at least one representative from the centre should attend the Agreement Trial to ensure the centre applies the marking criteria to the standard set by the examination council. It was still apparent that some teachers are not attending the Agreement Trial; it should be noted that it is the council's expectation that centres undertaking this specification should be represented at this autumn event.

## Appraisal

The moderators continue to be generally pleased by the standard of appraisal and some of the candidates' responses were described as "articulate", "insightful" and "impressive."

There were, however, a number of candidates awarded top marks by teachers on the day of moderation who did not express their ideas with insight or convey aspects of analytical thinking. It was apparent again during this year's series that Assessment Objective 3 had been over marked at a significant number of centres.

The specification states clearly what is required in order to achieve marks for Assessment Objective 3 in the accomplished mark band.

- Candidate's appraisal and evaluation of their own and others' work will be insightful and analytical and will account fully for the contribution of planning, and preparation.
- They will use the appropriate terminology to communicate ideas with perception and clarity and will understand fully the effectiveness of the drama.
- Ideas for how the outcomes could be further developed will be creative and clearly articulated in their evaluation.

Centres must ensure that appraisals take place in a quiet space to enable students, teachers and moderators to focus on this important process. Teachers should also concentrate on areas of research and rehearsal in their questioning of students.

## Problem Areas

Difficulties experienced this year were again relatively few and teachers are to be congratulated on their continued hard work and dedication.

In conclusion centres should, however, note the following:

- Marking on the day should reflect standards set at the Agreement Trial.
- Marking on the day must also reflect closely the marks awarded at internal moderation/standardisation.
- The length of the presentation must reflect the specification requirements.
- Candidates **must engage in background research** as part of the preparation process and be prepared to talk about this knowledgeably at appraisal.

Well done to all who participated so successfully in the 2015 GCSE Drama Moderation.

## Contact details

The following information provides contact details for key staff members:

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