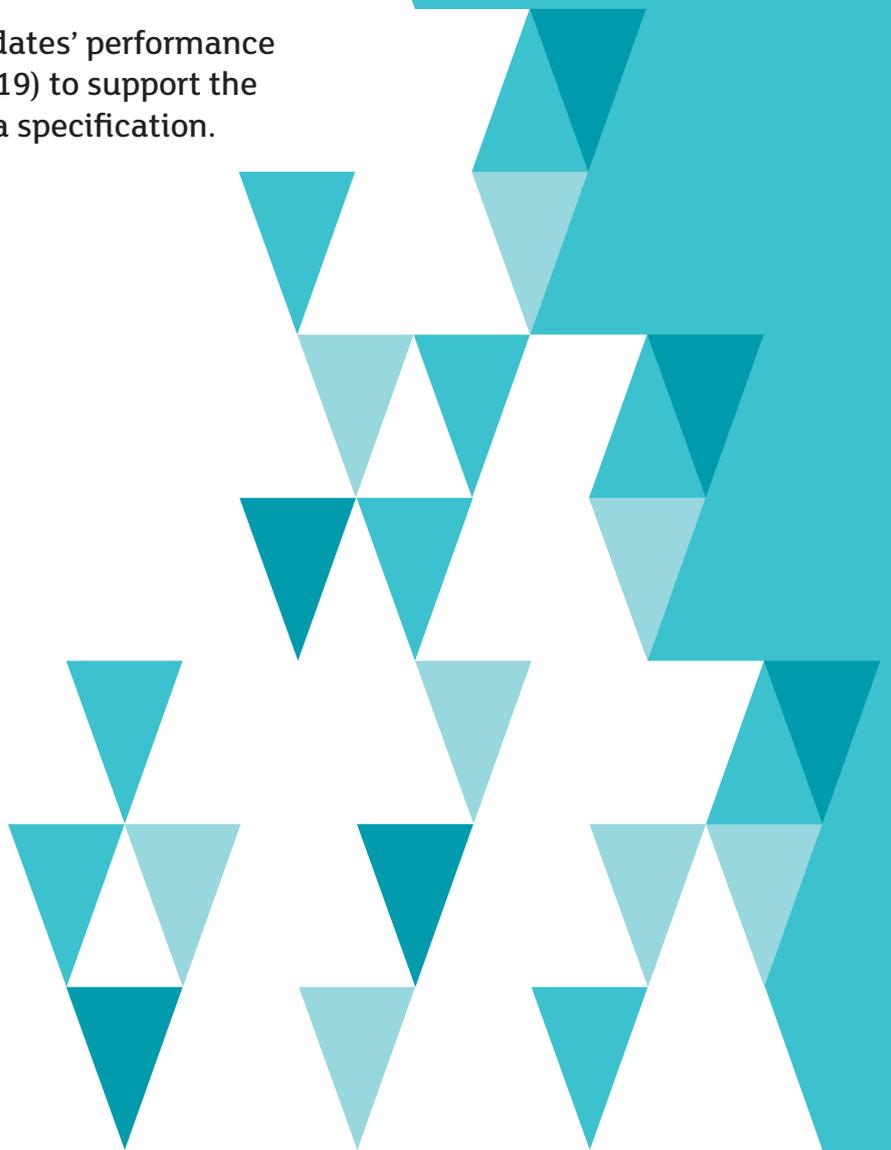


# GCSE



## CCEA GCSE Exemplifying Examination Performance Drama

This is an exemplification of candidates' performance in GCSE examinations (Summer 2019) to support the teaching and learning of the Drama specification.



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# EXEMPLIFYING EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE

## GCSE Drama

### Introduction

These materials illustrate aspects of performance from the 2019 summer GCSE examination series of CCEA's revised GCSE Specification in 2017.

Students' grade A responses are reproduced verbatim and accompanied by commentaries written by senior examiners. The commentaries draw attention to the strengths of the students' responses and indicate, where appropriate, deficiencies and how improvements could be made.

It is intended that the materials should provide a benchmark of candidate performance and help teachers and students to raise standards.

For further details of our support package, please visit our website at [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk)

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicola Black', written in a cursive style.

Nicola Black

Education Manager, Drama

Email: [nblack@ccea.org.uk](mailto:nblack@ccea.org.uk)

Telephone: 028 9026 1200 ext. 2816



**GCSE: Drama**

**Component 3: Knowledge and  
Understanding of Drama**

**Grade: A Exemplar**



## Russell: *Blood Brothers*

**Q1** Spend about 20 minutes on questions 1(a) and 1(b).

**Q1a** Briefly outline the ideas which you have researched for a production of *Blood Brothers* with reference to:

- the social context of the play; and
- the language of the play. [6]

### Student's response

*Blood Brothers is a play written in 1983 by Willy Russell, and spans 20 years, from the 1960s to the 1980s. The play is set during Margaret Thatcher's rule as Prime Minister, and is set in Liverpool. At this time, unemployment was becoming increasingly common, especially in the 1980s, where it reached an all time in Liverpool. One of the main themes of the play is class, which is shown through the families of Mrs Johnstone and Mrs Lyons. The middle class and the working class are the main focus. There was also an increased drug and alcohol useage in Liverpool at the time, shown through the character of Sammy.*

*As it is set in Liverpool, Willy Russell uses colloquicle language and Liverpudlian dialect to emphasise the class difference between the characters. Language plays an important role in the story, becoming a barrier between characters at times and causing comedic misunderstandings.*

### Examiner's comments

This question is new to candidates and carries 6 marks. Research material for the answers is available on the CCEA microsite. Candidates are asked to briefly outline ideas on two areas of the play from a total list of 8 areas. Candidates should provide 3 valid points for each bullet point.

This candidate has made at least 3 points about social context including period, prime minister, unemployment, drugs and alcohol and 2 relevant points about language including colloquial dialect and use of comedy and therefore has made good reference to social context and language and receives 5 marks at the top of mark band 3.

Question 1a	Mark awarded
6 marks	5 marks

**Q1b** With reference to a live or recorded theatre event which you have seen, suggest one **SOUND** idea which you could include in your production.

- Write down the title of the theatre event which you saw;
- describe the idea from this event;
- analyse how you could use this idea in your set text; and
- evaluate what you hope to achieve for your audience. [12]

## Student's response

*The live theatre event I saw was Blood Brothers by Willy Russell in the Grand Opera House in January 2018.*

*In this event, a heartbeat sample was used in a scene where Mrs Johnstone agrees to give Mrs Lyons one of her twin sons, and Mrs Lyons convinces Mrs Johnstone to swear it on the Bible. I would incorporate this into my production of Blood Brothers during the penultimate scene, where Mickey confronts Eddie about cheating with Linda. In the event I saw live, the sound designers had faded in the sample slowly and looped it, until a point of tension had been reached in the scene, and the sample's volume increased and reverberated, before washing out again once the scene had ended. I would include this sample in the same way, although in my production I would pan the sound so the audience feels surrounded. I would also speed up the heartbeat as the highest point of tension grew closer, which is when Mickey shoots Eddie and then is subsequently shot himself. This amplified sound reverberating around the audience would create a sense of anxiety and urgency. The audience should feel as though the heartbeat is Mickey's – erratic and fast because of his refrain from his medication and his crazed mental state that pushes him to confront Eddie so violently. I would hope this sound effect would make the audience feel genuine fear for what Mickey may do. To heighten the tension, and to create fear and shock in the audience, I would have the sample stop abruptly once both twins have been shot, to symbolise how they're hearts are no longer beating.*

## Examiner's comments

This question is new and having experienced live theatre, the candidates are asked to choose ONE idea from either lighting, sound or multimedia. They then give the title of the performance, describe the design idea, analyse how you would use it in your text and finally evaluate what you hope to achieve for your audience. There are 12 marks available for this question and all aspects must be completed to achieve top band marks.

This candidate was able to attend a live performance of their set text at the Opera House in Belfast, and clearly described how the sound of a heartbeat was faded in during the scene when Mrs Johnstone is swearing on the bible. The volume increases to build tension and then fades out at the end. The candidate describes how the sound 'reverberated' before fading.

The candidate then chose to use the idea when Mickey shoots Eddie suggesting that 'this amplified sound reverberating around the audience would create a sense of anxiety and urgency.' The candidate wanted the audience to feel 'as though the heartbeat was Mickey's – erratic and fast.' Also that it would 'heighten tension' and 'create genuine fear and shock in the audience' and the sound stops abruptly once the twins are both dead.

The candidate demonstrated thorough and precise knowledge and understanding of how their chosen sound design idea was presented. The use of the heartbeat was perceptive and imaginative and the evaluation on the audience was thorough and precise. The answer gained full marks.

Question 1b	Mark awarded
12 marks	12

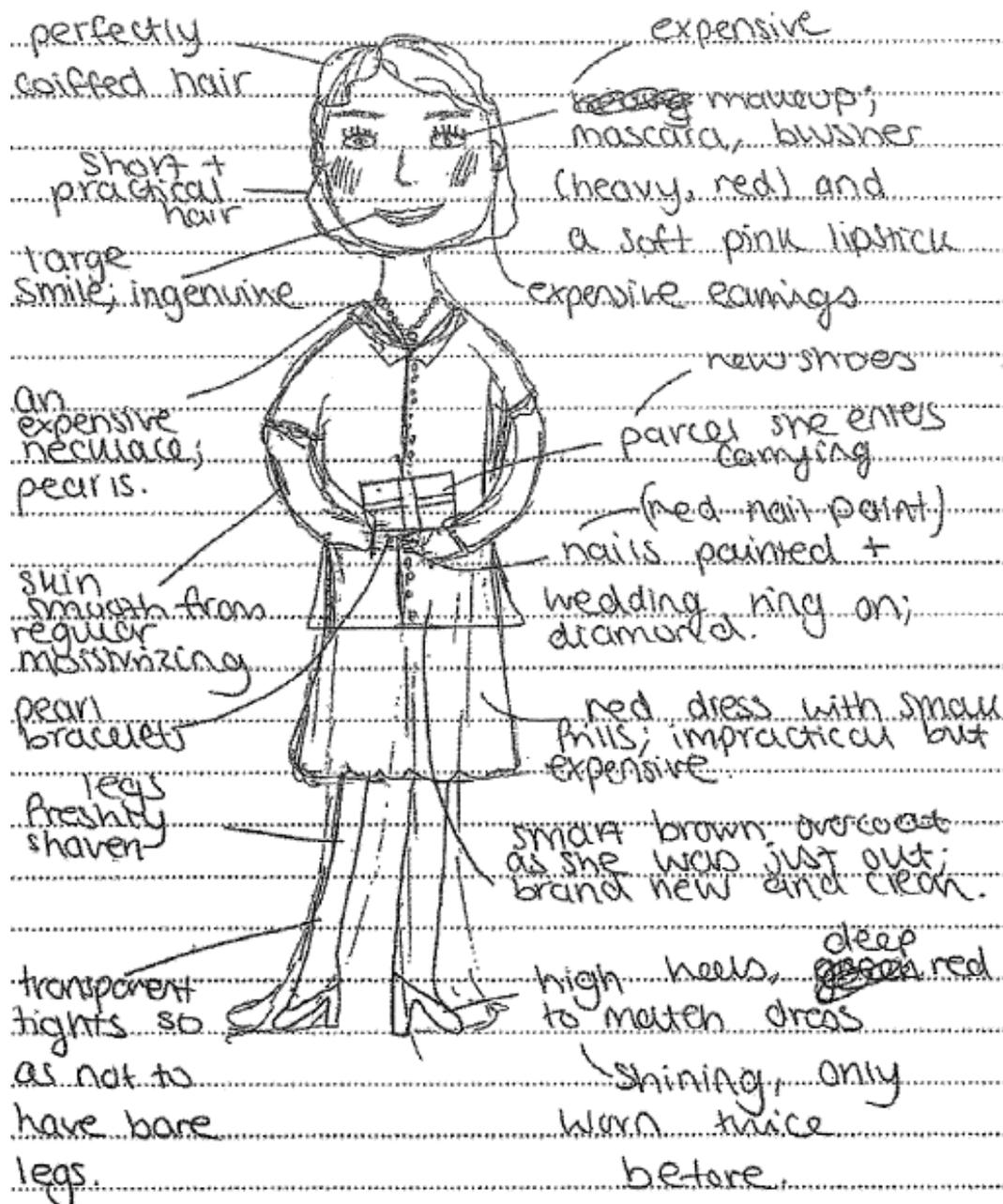
**Q2** Spend about 30 minutes on questions 2(a) and 2(b).

**Q2a** Draw and label a costume sketch for **Mrs Lyons**, at her first entrance in Act 1 of the play.

You should make reference to:

- colour, shape, materials, make-up; and
- any appropriate accessories and personal properties (props). [12]

### Student's response



## Examiner's comments

This question is similar to the legacy paper except that the period and status are part of the justification in answer 2b. From experience of previous answers, make-up, accessories and props should also be referenced as appropriate.

The sketch provided in this answer for Mrs Lyons at her first entrance in Act 1, was precise and imaginative with thorough reference to all aspects of her costume; including a pearl necklace, red dress, soft pink lipstick and perceptive detail of the diamond wedding ring and moisturised skin. Written communication was excellent and meaning was communicated clearly. There could have been more detail on materials but the candidate has given enough detail to receive full marks.

Question 2a	Mark awarded
12 marks	12 marks

**Q2b** Justify your choice of ideas presented in part (a).

You should include:

- the period in which the play is set;
- the social status of the character; and
- **one** appropriate quotation to support your answer. [12]

### Student's response

*Mrs Lyons wears a red dress with small frills, which is incredibly expensive and impractical due to the soft and flimsy material, as she is middle class and doesn't work, therefore having money to spare and the freedom to wear clothes that aren't hardwearing, as Mrs Lyons doesn't even do any housework since Mrs Johnstone does it for her. She wears a brown overcoat which looks brand new and carries a parcel of brand new shoes, representing how she has money to spare on new items frequently, but also time to spare to go shopping as she doesn't work. The dress and coat also allude to the time period the play is set in, as these would be commonly worn in the 1960S. She holds the parcel because the stage directions say, "Mrs Lyons enters, carrying a parcel". Mrs Lyons wears some makeup; just enough to amplify her eyes, cheeks and lips. It's understated and expensive, as she would view herself as a sophisticated woman who doesn't need heavy makeup as she would think herself 'naturally beautiful'. She wears a pearl necklace, as well as pearl earrings and bracelets, to flash her wealth elegantly to those she sees when on the high street. Her red heels match her dress, and would look shiny and as if they are also brand new. She wears heels as she enjoys being taller than other women, especially Mrs Johnstone, which relates to her love of power. Her arms and legs are freshly shaven and moisturised, so as to appear as feminine and appealing as possible, and indicating that she has time to spend on her appearance. Her nails would be perfectly painted red to match her dress, and her polish would be fresh and unchipped; and she would wear her diamond wedding ring on her right hand, a symbol of her committed marriage to Mr Lyons.*

## Examiner's comments

Precise understanding has been reflected in the justification given in this answer. The candidate has clearly justified why they have chosen the specific detail of the costume including an 'impractical, red dress with frills in soft flimsy material' because Mrs Lyons 'doesn't work' or 'do any housework', brand new shoes and overcoat because 'she has money to spare'. The candidate also includes the appropriate time period, status and a relevant quotation. Perceptive and imaginative justification is included in aspects such as make-up and having matching shoes because she 'enjoys being taller,' and she moisturises as she has 'time to spend on her appearance'.

The detailed justification is mark band 4 and worthy of full marks.

Question 2b	Mark awarded
12 marks	12 marks

### Q3 Spend about 40 minutes on questions 3(a), 3(b) and 3(c).

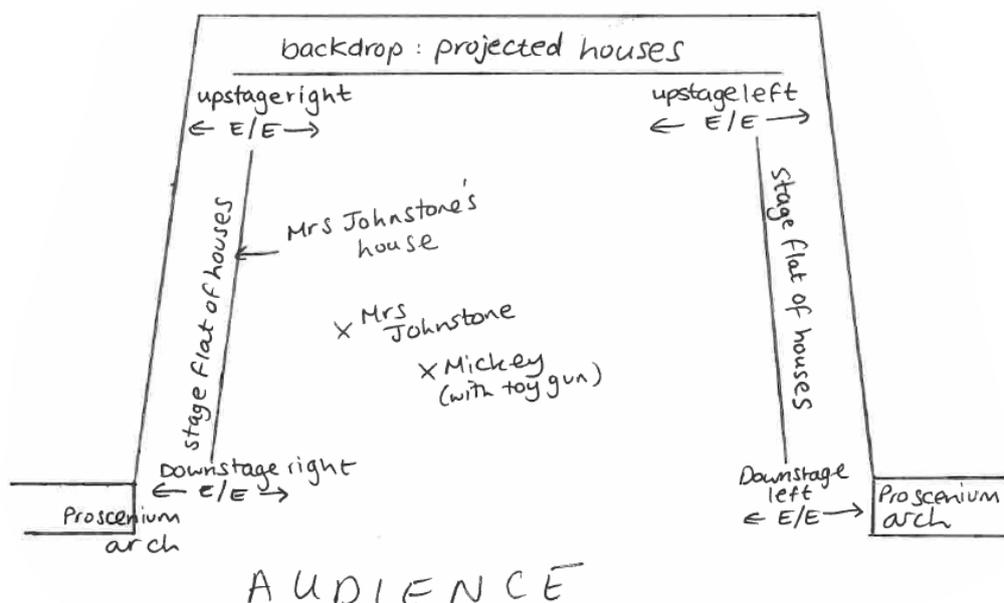
Look at the lines between Mickey and Mrs Johnstone from before the Wish I was Our Sammy scene in Act One.

**Mrs Johnstone: 'What have I told you about playin' up near there.'**  
**Mrs Johnstone: '... where I can see y'.'** (13 lines of text)

#### Q3a Draw a stage plan for the extract which includes:

- exits and entrances;
- set;
- the position of the audience; and
- the positions of the characters on the opening lines. [10]

### Student's response



### Examiner's comments

This question is new and focuses on set design for a particular moment in the play which is established with lines of text. Candidates are asked to draw a stage plan which includes exits and entrances, set, position of audience, position of the characters on the opening lines, and sightlines. This question is much like the costume question (2a), as a sketch and annotation are required but there is no justification required so the detail needs to be thorough and precise to achieve top band marks. A key is often useful and most candidates will use a bird's-eye view. Experience of 'live theatre' is very useful in answering this question but candidates should keep their ideas close to their own experience of a typical proscenium-arched school stage.

The candidate has suggested a proscenium arch stage with the audience clearly marked. Two upstage exit/entrances and two downstage exit/entrances, both right and left are clearly marked but require some backing into the wings. Mickey is appropriately positioned close to his mother. The position of the house flats could be more angled for the audience and could include a door for Mrs Johnstone. The backdrop of the projected houses is excellent and a lamp-post could also be included as part of the set.

The senior team considered the fact that this was a new question for candidates.

Question 3a	Marks awarded
10 marks	9 marks

**Q3b** As a director, give the actors some advice on how they could rehearse the extract for performance. In your answer refer to:

- the mood and context;
- the use of one rehearsal idea; and
- the text. [14]

### Student's response

*The mood of this scene is tense and charged, as Mrs Johnstone is angry at Mickey for playing in the middle class area of the neighbourhood, where she had previously warned him not to play. However, Mickey doesn't understand how serious his mother is, and disregards the apparent severity of his actions by making a joke and then retaliating against his mother by insisting that Sammy, his older brother, can play there.*

*The relationship between the mother and son in this scene is strained, clear in how Mrs Johnstone snaps "shut up" and how Mickey tries to fight against his not being allowed to play there. As a director directing this extract, I would stop the action just after Mickey says, "But why..." and before Mrs Johnstone replies with "Just shut up". I would ask the actress playing Mrs Johnstone to thought-track her character just before she snaps at Mickey. I would expect her to be pent up with quiet anger, and so be thinking "will he just drop it?" Why does he want to know so badly? Will he shut up?" I would then have the actress delve deeper into why Mrs Johnstone is so affected by the question, expecting her response to be akin to how "Mickey is too young to understand why they aren't like us and won't want him playing near there"; 'them' being the middle class families living in the area Mickey is playing. The actress playing Mrs Johnstone should think this as she is deciding whether telling Mickey the truth would be a good idea, and trying to convince herself that he is still too young. Furthermore, her worries would be increased by the knowledge of her other boy's existence as Mrs Lyons 'son', and I would expect her to momentarily panic over Mickey somehow meeting Edward or Mrs Lyons, and expect the thought-track to produce an answer such as "That's where Mrs Lyons lives, and I can't have him near there! What if he meets his twin? What if he dies!" Mrs Johnstone's superstition should be evident in her thinking pattern, here.*

### Examiner's comments

The focus of this question is rehearsal work and it is 'as a director' that the candidate is approaching the answer. It is a simpler form of the legacy paper as the text sample is given and only ONE rehearsal idea is required. The answer should be well structured using the guidance of the question, and therefore should begin with giving the mood and context of the text moment, develop one appropriate rehearsal idea and include the application of text.

This candidate clearly describes the mood and context of the text with Mrs Johnstone and Mickey, saying that it is 'tense and charged' and clearly reflects that Mickey does not understand the severity of his actions. The candidate further describes the relationship as 'strained' and uses thought tracking at key moments of text to develop the characters of both Mickey and Mrs Johnstone. The candidate uses thought tracking at key moments and clearly uses the text to advise the actors on their performances. There could have been more precise detail on the mood but comprehensive understanding of how the actors perform is evident. There is detailed reference to text, although some specific detail of voice, movement or gesture could be added for full marks.

Question 3b	Marks awarded
14 marks	12 marks

**Q3c** As an actor playing Mrs Johnstone, give examples of how you would use **voice** in your performance of the extract. Refer directly to the text. [14]

### Student's response

*As an actor playing Mrs Johnstone, I would begin the extract with a low volume when I say "What have I told you about playin' up near there?" The question would be voiced as a warning, the anger evident in my voice, as my voice wobbles when I say "near there".*

*"Come here" would be said slightly louder, the "come" almost a shout. "So whose fault was it then?" would be emphasised as a question, my voice raising when I say "then". The word "whose" would be inflected lower than the other words in the sentence to represent how I know it was Mickey's fault, and am humouring him.*

*When I say "Don't ever go up there" my voice would be low again; another warning. I would stress the "ever" to emphasise my point. I'm upset that Mickey has disobeyed me and so my voice would wobble again at the end of the sentence. "Do you hear me?" would be louder and brasher. I want him to know that I'm extremely serious and don't take it lightly that Mickey has disobeyed me. My voice would raise several octaves when I say this as my heightened emotions have gotten the better of me slightly.*

*"Our Sammy's older than you" would be said monotone and matter-of-factly, as I'm now becoming increasingly annoyed that Mickey continues to push this.*

*When I finally snap and say "Just shut up", I would shout it to emphasise my annoyance and complete lack of patience towards Mickey. I would sigh before saying "never mind why", and would raise my voice on the word "mind" to emphasise how it shouldn't matter the reasoning; Mickey should obey me anyway. "You don't go up near there" would be said low again; one last warning that Mickey shouldn't ever play there again, or there will be serious consequence. I would also raise my voice slightly on the word "don't" to again emphasise the severity of the situation.*

*When I say "Now go on, get out an play" my tone would be softer and quieter. I'm less angry now, and have decided to let him play outside, as long as he doesn't disobey my orders again. This is evident when I say "But stay outside the front door where I can see y' ". I would raise my voice dramatically when I say "front door" to indicate to Mickey exactly where he has to be so I can see him. By the end of the extract, I have cooled off about the situation and am willing to give Mickey another chance.*

## Examiner's comments

This question is very similar to question 3b from the legacy paper except that the answer deals specifically with a short extract of text. The candidate needs to demonstrate perceptive and imaginative knowledge and understanding of how the character uses either voice, movement or facial expression in performance. The question requires the candidate to respond 'as an actor', so the answer requires precise detail and a range of skill in performance.

The candidate gave precise and detailed examples of how Mrs Johnstone would use her voice in this extract. A range of text detail was explored and analysed using specific vocabulary such as volume, pitch, emphasis, vocal rise and fall, monotone, tone change and pause. Meaning was clearly communicated using a range of different vocal skills and the comprehensive response is worthy of full marks.

Question 3c	Marks awarded
14 marks	14 marks

