

Literature and Performance

Overall grade boundaries

Grade:	E	D	C	B	A
Mark range:	0-7	8-15	16-22	23-28	29-36

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The chief issue in essays submitted for this subject is that a grasp of 'adaptation' is crucial to a truly appropriate research project. Very few of the candidates revealed either explicit or implicit awareness of the conceptual elements of moving the chosen text into performance of some kind, with a sense of the challenges and possibilities involved.

Much of the work submitted involved transferring or comparing ideas, characters and plots from their presence in the text to their presentation in a film. There were very few instances where texts were studied in adaptation to performance on stage. The course itself is an interdisciplinary mix of Literature and Theatre, so the essays should really arise from some competence of one or both of these disciplines. A sense of the discipline's terminology is an expectation which was only sometimes met. A study of two film productions or a glossary of theatre terms applied to a theatrical production did not really meet the demand for an essay in this subject.

Written texts ranged from childhood favourites through adolescent romance or illness fictions to some reasonably challenging literary works. The complexity of the text chosen is likely to have some impact on the validity of the research project—and it should be remembered that the Extended Essay is in fact a research essay. Some essays showed an admirable approach to such investigation but many were simply a comparison of the materials of a text to its manifestation in a film.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: research question

Research questions have an impact on the shaping of the essay. Transformation of the original text (as in *Romeo and Juliet* to *West Side Story*) offers ample opportunity to investigate the critical backgrounds of both pieces and leads to illumination about two forms.

In some cases it was hard to see the involvement of the supervisor upon whom the process also depends, especially in helping the student understand the requirements and shape a viable Research Question.

Criterion B: introduction

Introductions to essays are not something that come naturally to students and they need some direction. Some fulfilled the object of framing the Research Question and indicating how the investigation would proceed, as well as providing some wider context for selecting the subject. Many essays only partially or minimally managed this task.

Criterion C: investigation

A wider net of research needs to be cast for many investigations. One version of a Grimm Fairy tale adapted to a Disney film cannot really stand alone as a quick summary of the two entities. Both have contexts of origination and some reception and production history. Candidates often did not seem to have a sense of what this criterion demands.

Criterion D: knowledge and understanding of the topic studied

On the whole, candidates could reveal that they were acquainted with the text and some performed well here. However, in cases where the knowledge and understanding was limited, it was very common for candidates to only achieve 2 of the 4 available marks.

Criterion E: reasoned argument

This essay task needs to move beyond simply providing two descriptions. There needs to be an argument which drives the discussion further than to about page 9 of the student's work, where the essays that lack such a focus falter and drift. Candidates need to perceive that they are taking on two texts and they need to have more than a reaction or simply an opinion, to show that they see how adaptive choices have been made and whether or not they work to reflect the original text, wholly or partially.

Criterion F: application of analytical and evaluative skills

This criterion is very much linked to the preceding one; if there is no argumentative edge to the discussion, analysis and evaluation are likely to be weak. Some candidates had very clear views about what things occurred in the process of adaptation; when these were evident, it was possible to give higher marks.

Criterion G: use of language appropriate to the subject:

As above, the terminology of the two disciplines should be in evidence, even beyond writing clear and correct prose. While language was sometimes very good, consistent and credible use of the terms was not frequently observable, with the absence of 'terminology appropriate to the subject' a bar to high marks in this criterion.

Criterion H: conclusion

There were clear defining lines between success and lack of it in this criterion.

Some candidates embraced the opportunity to gather their argument to a point of conclusion, and many wavered or seemed not to have a sense of what a reader looks for in a conclusion.

Summarizing, re-contextualizing, even raising further research issues were hallmarks of success here.

Criterion I: formal presentation

In many cases candidates were able to help their overall mark by simply including the elements listed in the notes on the criterion. It should be noted that there was at times very helpful inclusion of visual materials, but only those that are truly germane should appear in the body of the essay or appendixes.

Criterion J: abstract

The abstract is a straightforward task in which the Research Question, the process followed in the investigation and the conclusion of the enterprise, are rewarded or not. Some candidates seemed unacquainted with these demands and quickly lost 2 marks, as all three elements must be discernible.

Criterion K: holistic judgement

Examiners are looking to credit as much as they can the inventiveness and insight invested in this project. There are not many that receive a 4 but there are some, and these are usually the ones that have scored very well in Criteria A, D, E, and F, complemented by solid marks in the other criteria.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

- Ensure that candidates truly understand the nature of what is looked for in the Literature and Performance essays. This implies that supervisors are themselves clear as to what is appropriate for these investigations. The portion of the EE guide that addresses the subject needs close critical scrutiny. Choosing to write a Literature and Performance essay should not be a refuge of last resort.
- Go through each of the criteria in the advisory and first draft conferences and pose questions to the students about how they are addressing them.
- Provide candidates with access to works that discuss adaptation so they have some sense of the theory and practice involved.