

TEXT & PERFORMANCE

Overall grade boundaries

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-13	14-29	30-44	45-57	58-70	71-84	85-100

Standard level written tasks

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-2	3-5	6-8	9-10	11-13	14-17	18-20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

There was a wide range of work with a preponderance of Shakespeare, a writer who, given the richness of the figurative language and the verse of the plays, is an appropriate choice. The following texts were the subject of the written work: *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Metamorphosis*, and *Twelfth Night*.

The only text which presented problems from this list was the Berkoff adaptation of Kafka's "Metamorphosis" primarily because the excessive stage directions rather compromised the independence of the candidates who were dealing with the staging of pieces from it. It is the very lack of stage directions in Shakespeare that adds to his suitability to this task since candidates have the freedom to interpret a scene or passage that a staging of a Beckett or a Miller piece for example might deny them.

Candidates performance against each criterion

Criterion A:

The analysis of the literary features of the text is crucial to an understanding of how a part of it might be staged and equally important to the development of a concept for that staging. The analysis should take the form of a critical scrutiny of the language of the text, of tone registered, of mood established and of the wider context. In these cases, specific and focused analysis will be supported by careful use of quotation. Wider issues such as character, theme and intention will also complement this approach. The terminology employed will be that of literary criticism and it is necessary that the candidates who attempt to dramatize passages or

scenes from a play should have a close understanding of the whole piece as well as the passage. Treatment of wider issues suggested in the passage will exemplify this understanding. Candidates struggled a little with this criterion. The better candidates were equipped not only to adopt a critical perspective but also cleverly to link analysis of literary features to decisions made in the "chosen approach to the text". The best essays established this link. Validate, illustrate, explore are all key verbs associated with the mechanics of quotation.

Criterion B:

Again the chosen approach to the text will summon the result of the literary critique and bring it to bear on the process of staging the passage. There were some brilliantly achieved pieces; one that will stay long in the examiner's memory concerned a scene between Lucio and Isabella from *Measure for Measure*.

The setting of the piece in context is important since it gives the candidate a focus. Intention is synonymous with focus too and the realization should have a strong sense of purpose facilitated by an appreciation of how the passage is written, to what purpose stylistic devices are employed and how that style can be conveyed in performance. Some candidates attempted to incorporate theory to the challenge of the text with both Brecht and Stanislavski being favourites in this context. Although the examiner is not averse to this, candidates need to realise that when they include a practitioner they are introducing a third element into the relationship between the candidate and the text. This is an element that is strictly unnecessary and an element that, in my experience rarely adds value to the engagement between student and text.

The examiner is as open to the realization of two or three smaller discrete passages linked by character or theme as by the realization of a single longer passage. Both approaches were used by candidates to good effect.

The use of "I" rather than "we" is really preferable in this exercise since the writer is conveying his or her own experience and the examiner wishes to credit a "focused, detailed and imaginative exploration" of how the dramatic "potential" of the passage (s) can be realized. So a very selective use of "we" is advisable.

Criterion C:

The use of language involves, as it does in so much of this course, a facility to move between critical idioms, literary, process and performance analyses. This is not easy and many candidates still find the language of theatre difficult to use with accuracy and accuracy is vital to any enterprise that takes place in a restricted space. The importance of rhythm and pace in movement; of tone in speech; of diction that follows the logic of the verse pattern; of language that has moments of emphasis; pauses, even silence between the words; the challenge of using space and of finding an adequate and sensitive language to describe physical movement; posture and gesture; all this comes into play under Criterion B and the better candidates really shone. There were some excellent analyses of the pentameter and rhetorical devices (so key to Shakespeare), which in the best of the essays communicated a love of the verse.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Choose different passages; 20 students choosing the same passage from the same play is not a good sign, although it is obviously permissible. It makes the examiner's job more repetitive than it needs to be and certainly compromises the genuine responses of the candidates if they all share common insights.
- Try and link critical awareness of literary features and style of the chosen passage to the challenge of exploring its dramatic potential for the stage. This effectively means linking Criterion A to B and demonstrating how one provokes exploration and direction in the other.
- Always look for the specifics of the passage whether from a literary or dramatic point of view.
- Use quotation to validate a position or conviction about the passage, to illustrate a stylistic point or explore it. The use of quotation as a mode of text or theatrical exploration is usually an exciting and worthwhile exercise.
- Please write the requisite number of words which is between 1,500 and 2,000.
- Contextualise the passage and study the whole play.
- Write and perform out of a sense of personal conviction supported by literary and theatrical analysis.

Standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-7	8-15	16-22	23-26	27-31	32-35	36-40

The range and suitability of the work submitted

There were some truly outstanding pieces with candidates managing to make the very best of bare stage space and finding ever more ingenious ways of using their bodies as props or points of tension. Use of production elements is still slowly developing and is not of course a necessary feature in the task. Before remarking on the transformations, it should be noted that production elements like lighting and costuming are beginning to assume a larger role in the pieces. Lighting in particular is becoming more sophisticated. One transformation from Garcia Marquez was clearly enhanced by the use of fade in's and out and soundscapes that complemented lighting. The examiner is mindful of the caveat that such "design" features are not what is being assessed but schools are to be complemented on providing a strong foundation in production for the performance. It makes sense to use a spotlight and close the

lighting down if a candidate is quoting a monologue from "Prufrock" just as a broader wash of lighting might capture the movement of a chorus. This is just common sense. The use of functional as opposed to expressive costume is absolutely acceptable but again blacks and whites (by far the most favoured chroma) can take on a powerful quality when synchronised in movement or focus, freeze frames can be clichéd or artificial but in the Prufrock piece they were far more than that. The creation of spatial patterns and the understanding of proxemics as often denoting status exchanges was highly sophisticated in the dramatizations of Grimm and Garcia Marquez. The multiple role plays so common in this assessment task were not always so successful. It is a serious business attempting this skill and at times the student actor lacked the vocal and physical range to render this convincing. The improvisational "feel" to some of the pieces worked to add energy and dynamism to the action but there is a considerable distinction between improvisation from a consolidated performance and hapless uncertainty. You cannot "wing" this task and too many candidates tried to. The sight of a candidate engaging in meandering movements on stage to no evident purpose is difficult to watch but easy to assess.

Was the work suitable? Yes it was. Schools have realised that the more enriched a text is, the more various its potential meanings, the more likely the student actor is to produce some ingenious work. "Originality", "sensitivity", "imaginative" "conviction" are the key terms in the mark bands that candidates need to puzzle out in their approach to performance. How can these qualities be registered on stage? The teacher will need to prepare candidates carefully for this assessment task since the skills of the actor do not come naturally. Skills can be taught and learnt.

Another key point should be raised at this juncture, since it contains something of a warning to the crazed personality on stage. Once the actor is visible to the examiner and is on stage he/she is being assessed. The best of the work this year had a very evident ensemble quality to it, with candidates being focused on the action and high levels of concentration being forthcoming from all actors not just those who are speaking. Some of the less effective work came from single individuals on stage striving ineffectually to be convincing through long monologues that would test a professional actor. Students at this level derive great benefit from each other and together are capable of fine work but to command an empty stage alone, with nothing to support you is a challenge too far for the average student attempting this task.

The range of the work was broad, Garcia Marquez, Wilfred Owen, Camus, TS Eliot, Grimm's Tales, Angela Carter, Khalil Ghabrain and Coleridge. The enriched texts provide the most exciting stimuli for transformation and some of the explorations of the authors mentioned here were genuinely exciting and thought provoking.

Candidates performance against each criterion

Criterion B:

The mark from the teacher is crucial here and largely determines the mark from the examiner unless the evidence from the oral presentation contradicts the level of response registered by the mark. A candidate receiving 5/5 according to Criterion B will certainly have to present the requisite evidence for such a high assessment in the presentation. The level at which the

candidate treats the process as a crucial factor. Lists of what "we did" and how hard "I worked" indicate nothing more than an adequate part in the "process leading up to performance". A more selective and focused account of dealing with key theatrical challenges in a thoughtful and sensitive manner is better. The dynamic of the ensemble, the orchestration of movement, the elaboration of the acting space, the management of time are just four examples of what could be considered as theatrical challenges in this context.

Criterion C:

This needs to be divided into three parts: use of language, structure and organization. The ability of the candidate to change registers fluently from subject specific terminology, associated with literary analysis, to performance analysis is an example of the first part. This flexibility between idioms can be challenging for EAL candidates who are well represented in the subject and so it has proved. The structure of the presentation was also difficult, the weighting of Criterion E, for example at 10 marks double that of B, C and D, should effect the choices taken in the structure of the response. This was rarely the case with the absorbing subject of the play taking precedence over the literary features of the original text, and certainly over subsequent rationales for its transformation. Organization was clearly an issue for articulate candidates who spoke for 8 minutes rather than 15 and there was a high number of candidates who could not reach the allotted time.

Criterion D:

This is about reflection on practice and asks the candidate to review the actual performance of the transformed piece. It requires an objective eye and a coherent evaluation of how challenges were met and overcome (or not) as the case may be. Take the example of focus: how as the recipient of action did I control my focus, when did I switch my focus, how did I display my skill in this area? This is the kind of question that belongs to the analysis of one's own performance. This analysis should be voiced in the first person. The use of "we" in the oral presentation makes it difficult for the examiner to register the individual and not the group. It is the individual candidate that is being assessed. Too much of the reflection here was generic and general, referring to the "performance" rather than specific aspects of it and making no real effort to connect across the criteria. This is the mark of the outstanding candidate, the organic quality of the experience registered by the challenge of dealing with a literary feature of the text (E), working on it through the skill testing process (B) and evaluating how it was registered dramatically in the performance (D). Few candidates managed this connection.

Criterion E:

This was poorly done as not nearly enough attention was paid to literary features which were often dispatched in a few general identifications of style, if that. The association of interesting literary features lending themselves, or presenting fascinating challenges for transformation, needs to be considered in the rationales for performance. If this simply comes down to choosing a novel that has "five parts for girls" then we are really not doing this exercise justice. The literary features of the text are the material that all candidates need to focus on because the challenge is to translate exactly these features into a different mode of

presentation, a different form. Much critical scrutiny and literary analysis of the piece is required in order to explore the subjects to be worked on in B and reflected on as drama in D.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Teach acting skills.
- Continue to choose challenging texts for transformation.
- Remember that every visible movement and reaction will be assessed; it is not about the talking head.
- Ensure that candidates have understood what the criteria are asking for.
- Find a quiet place for recording the oral presentation.
- Build secure and simple frameworks for performance.
- Insist on a specific focus on the literary features of the core text.
- Connect the demands of the criteria in a response where candidates are encouraged to display their organizational skills, their structural response to the demands of the criteria, their comparative weighting and their ability to move between idioms.
- Use the correct subject guide.
- Rehearse the filming and rehearse the oral presentation, evaluate the sound and visual quality of both before the “real thing”.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-2	3-5	6-8	9-11	12-14	15-17	18-20

The area of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

The questions for this paper tend to be open-ended and candidates find it a challenge to convert the general directions of the question into responses focusing on specific detail. The familiarity with the core text is key to their ability to shape that understanding to the type of question they are likely to receive.

The evidence that some candidates appear to be "preparing" a response to likely questions is a cause for preoccupation. For it was clear from some of the scripts that candidates were

going to write particular responses whether the question required them or not! The candidate needs to answer the question on the paper not the question they thought was going to be asked.

The importance of quotation is clearly paramount in this assessment task since constant reference needs to be made to the selected passage. The most effective uses made of this were when candidates used references as sources for exploration, as ways of revealing those parts of the text that could be excitingly transferred into theatre. Question 1 was an example of the kind of question where no valid attempt on it could be made without a detailed understanding of the passage and a capacity to use quotation as a basis for the response. The ability to move fluently between different kinds of discourse/idiom/terminology is challenging but obviously fundamental to a trans-disciplinary course. Candidates need to write precisely in a subject specific language and the ability to do this will differentiate the candidates in this particular task.

The staging of a prose piece calls for an understanding of acting and production. The descriptions written to set a scene in a novel require an understanding of staging if that particular novel is going to make an effective piece of drama. Stage design, the design of a lighting effect, the acknowledgment of the importance of visual effects in relation to character, determines the acting style for the piece. The whole business of moving a concept into a practical piece of staging is a wonderfully exciting enterprise but candidates can get carried away. In many ways their imaginations have been schooled by film rather than theatre so it should be a fundamental part of the preparation for this assessment task that they be taken to the theatre regularly and asked to write careful and critical responses to what they have seen with due reference to the workings of all the production elements.

The choice of text is very important. There was, as there should be, a wide range of choice e.g.: Fitzgerald, Calvino, Mary Shelley, and Achebe. At times one felt that the text was causing problems for the candidates before they had even begun to work on transformation. It is important that candidates ensure that they stay on the task set by the question and not move beyond the passage with extraneous staging ideas.

The areas of the programme and examination in which the candidates appeared well prepared

The candidates must have a fundamental ability to imagine. This is the sine qua non for this task. There were some wonderful ideas for staging, a real sense for how literary metaphor and symbol can be magnified to define an understanding of a theme on stage. Uses of production elements such as lighting were in evidence here. The more effective responses tended to understand how production elements can be used simply and practically to convey on stage what appears as descriptive writing in prose.

The candidates generally used passages that were manageable within the constraints of the task. There was a concern to contextualize that is so important for the examiner since this is a simple way to establish general meaning before looking at the specific requirements of the question.

The candidates made generally relevant choices in their selection of passages for transformation; the key issue here is the conditioning factor of the question.

The strength and weakness of candidates in the treatment of individual questions

By way of introduction it is worth noting that Question 3 was, by some margin, the most popular question, Question 1 came a very distant second and Question 2 had only a few takers.

Question 1:

This was a question that focused initially on an analysis of language and then encouraged candidates to open out into staging possibilities. It was a question that was generally well done. Candidates welcomed the opportunity to draw out and dramatize hidden meanings in the text. Once the candidates established their analysis of the language and demonstrated how the subtext functioned they were able to create appropriate stagings. At times they found the former a little challenging. The question also threw some considerable attention on the use of production elements and required the candidates to show how these can be designed to reveal what is suggestive in the text. Tone of voice, irony and suggestive resonance also played into acting style in relation to the portrayal of character.

Question 2:

This question did attract a number of candidates who had "Frankenstein" as a core text. The gothic was a fitting basis for exploration into the presentation of the monster which was a popular subject since it certainly provided opportunity for explorations into the macabre and the grotesque.

The visual element is prominent here so candidates tended to focus on design elements like costume and make up: lighting was also skilfully used at times. The exposure to a theorist like Artaud, who dealt with a shock doctrine in his thoughts on the theatre of cruelty, was evident in a couple of approaches but only in general terms. Again the mixture of someone else's theories on theatre to an individual task in an examination is not advisable as much more than a reference point. Broadly speaking, this assessment task is made more complicated by the imposition of theory.

One point worth making is that candidates need to have a keen practical awareness of how design elements work before they attempt to incorporate them into this assessment task. General comments about "dark lighting" or "grey gels" do little to clarify an approach to staging the macabre.

Question 3:

This was the most popular question and once the candidates focused on "movement" and "interaction" they generally made a worthwhile attempt to respond to the question. The basic acknowledgement that movement on stage is usually one form of power play or another generated some insightful arguments. The understanding of levels, of different points on the

stage, of entries and exits, of the effect the entry of a person can have on others and the realisation that the "pace" and "rhythm" of movement in itself needed consideration in certain contexts were all part of a challenge met with varying levels of success by candidates. At times the "meaning of the passage" took second place to the "meaning of the characters in the passage" and though often synonymous the two are not invariably so. Other candidates began by choosing a passage which articulated a strong theme of the novel as a whole and focused on movement and interaction contributing to a restatement of this in various ways. The examiner waited in vain for a candidate to make a clear distinction between interaction and movement in their introduction.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Study the text.
- Give lots of practice assignments; this is not the kind of question that can be improvised; the essay requires structure and many essays lacked this quality. Those which were structured always made the very best of the material selected for treatment.
- Production elements need to be taken into account and taught. It is not only about acting but creating a staging space and designing it in a way that allows the action to be powerfully (and effectively dramatised). Technical expertise is not required but an awareness of stagecraft is.
- Exemplars are useful and there are many examples of prose transformed into theatre. Candidates require exposure to this kind of work.
- The questions tend to be general since they have to be suitable for a variety of texts, so candidates must answer with specific and detailed reference to their chosen passage. Once candidates are taught how to do this they are nearly there.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-2	3-5	6-8	9-12	13-15	16-19	20-25

The area of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Poets chosen for study and assessment were, on the whole, appropriate. Teachers may want to give a little more consideration to whether the two poets provide obvious comparability in response to questions that are rather widely articulated.

Finding a way into the question was not always an easy path for some of the students, and teachers should provide as much practice as possible with construing and breaking down the questions as precisely as possible. In some cases it seemed as though the candidates were identifying one term, and building their answers around that term without considering the particular angle required or giving some indication of how the term is heard. For example, in Question 6, the term “ends” was not always very clearly addressed, and the answers tended to flounder. “Extremes in human experience” required the same kind of precision.

Candidates performance against each criterion

A. Knowledge and understanding of texts.

In some cases candidate revealed a passionate engagement with texts arising from strong knowledge and understanding. In other cases candidates seemed to be only rehearsing points they had been taught, without much indication of personal assimilation. Certainly one expects to see evidence that students have been led toward understanding by careful work in the classroom; the best answers are “perceptive” in a way that suggests they have reviewed their class work and taken it a little further in an individual way.

B. Response to the questions

By far, the most popular questions with this group of candidates were 3, 4 and 6. In most cases, formal considerations were overbalanced by didactic approaches in which poetry’s main objective seemed to be to teach one how to live better. Horace’s dictum “to teach and to delight” certainly encourages an appreciation of both aspects of poetry; however, many of the students foregrounded the rhetorical aspects of the poems, putting to one side an appreciation of the craft.

Few chose Question 1, which focused on the formal features of poetry, and this may indicate where students most like to set their focus. “Sense of place” in Question 5 elicited even fewer responses, and “human frailty” may have been a stumbling block as well, as it was seldom chosen.

Students need to be encouraged to write in some depth about specific poems rather than giving an overview of recurrent ideas and approaches connected to their study of a particular poet.

C. Appreciation of literary features

In all of the schools, one could discern that “devices” and sometimes a wider grounding in authorial choice and effect has been part of the instruction. Still the range of how these were handled was fairly wide. In some cases, candidates were quite pedantic, naming and listing literary features without conveying a sense that these features had any holistic connection or significance.

Students must really be prepared to take a wide topical angle like “human frailty” and bring it down not only to specific content but to how the content and form work in tandem to produce something called “a poem.”

D. Presentation

“Clear and logical” structures are certainly in order for students to do well in this descriptor. Many of the candidates indicated they had some notion of making the essay and its argument clear to the reader, although they did not always accomplish that goal. Most often, they made very weak links between the poets, something that can be effectively done in the introduction. Often, too the pattern of organization tended more in the direction of listing rather than of a graceful incorporation of evidence. There is always more to be learned and practised in this area; these candidates evinced some sense of how to create an essay, but many would be aided by more practice and critical response to their attempts.

E. Language

There were certainly some mistakes in all the usual areas of spelling and punctuation, but on the whole this set of candidates did not fall into any egregious or remarkable errors.

It would be good if they did some proofreading before submitting the essay. Some work with what a paragraph is and how it functions in an essay is something that needs to be addressed.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Most recommendations can be inferred from the reservations expressed above, but highlights are useful:

- It would not go amiss if the aesthetic intentions and concerns involved in poetry were perhaps conveyed as strongly as the thematic or didactic aspects.
- Candidates need considerable practice in taking the question from a very generic level to a much more specific one which offers an angle on the question in terms of particular poets.
- Some skills in constructing an argument and linking two parts of an answer would enhance the performance of candidates in this subject.