



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
June 2012**

Dance

DANC3

(Specification 2230)

Unit 3: Dance appreciation: content and context

Report on the Examination

Further copies of this Report on **the Examination** are available from: aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2012 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Copyright

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334).
Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX.

General

This was the third year of entry for the new A2 specification and the third examination of the written paper, DANC3.

For Section A and Section B, each question required a response in the form of an essay. Two questions were selected by the student, one from each section. Each question carried 40 marks. A banding system, involving five bands covering 40 marks, determined the mark awarded for each essay.

As in previous years, the more successful responses showed a focus on the question with detailed knowledge and understanding of the area of study or set work, a coherent structure and clarity in the written expression. Connections were made between content and context with detailed supporting examples. In a number of responses diagrammatic form was used effectively to support the written analysis.

The less successful responses did not maintain focus on the question. Although some knowledge was demonstrated, there was a tendency to make general points focusing on identification and description. There were often inaccuracies in the content, particularly for Section A. Examples were limited and usually lacked sufficient detail to support the point. Written expression was marred by poor spelling and a lack of clarity in the use of English.

It is important to allow an equal amount of time for each of the two questions in order to provide a sufficient response to access the range of marks across the paper.

This year there was a clear improvement in the quality of essay writing. There was a sense of style in the writing and a logical argument with a relevant introduction, sense of progression and concluding paragraph. However, poor handwriting makes the essays very difficult to read and can affect the communication of content.

Section A

The questions in Section A focused on the three areas of study and required the students to show a relevant response to the question through the demonstration of:

- a knowledge and understanding of the key features of the area of study and of the different approaches
- a knowledge of contextual factors
- supporting evidence through the use of appropriate examples
- a clarity in the line of argument and in the written expression

As in 2011 there was a tendency for the less successful essays to show pre-prepared responses to the previous year's questions. Some essays included everything that was known generally about the area of study with limited reference to the focus of the question. There were often inaccuracies in the knowledge or chronology which reflected the degree of understanding demonstrated. Although 40 marks are available for each question the use of the banding system means that the assessment relates to the quality of response rather than to the number of points or length of essay. Due to the amount of time available, it is important that the time is used effectively to respond to the requirements of the question and is not wasted on a large amount of unnecessary information.

Questions 1, 3 and 5

The focus of these questions was the identification of the features of the choreography relating to each of the areas of study. Identification of works was required with examples from the works to show a link between the choreographic feature and the content of the example. The links between the two could

relate to a variety of aspects of the content and creative process eg genre, style, dance structure, subject matter, movement content, dancers, use of physical setting and aural setting.

Successful responses showed recognition of the requirement to identify the choreographic features. Aspects of these features were explained and linked to examples from the works with discussion of the connection. The examples had sufficient detail to clarify this connection.

The less successful responses simply focused on the first part of the question and did not really acknowledge the choreographic features of the area of study. Works were identified but general statements were made about the choreography rather than clear examples showing a connection to a choreographic feature. Often pre-prepared answers to previous questions were written, focusing on practitioners and their styles. Consequently the reference to works and choreographic features became less evident in the response.

Questions 2, 4 and 6

These were popular questions, particularly question 4. They focused on a consideration of the changes and/or development (of the company or dance) in each of the areas of study throughout the period of time. The question attracted a wide range of approaches and the mark scheme allowed for such a range. The requirement of the question to consider the whole period was not always recognised. Similarly, if study of the area of study had been restricted to two practitioners closely linked in time and genre/training eg Fokine and Nijinsky, Alston and Davies, Berkeley and Astaire, it was unlikely that the response would show an overview of the development in the whole time period.

Successful responses showed a knowledge and detailed explanation of aspects of the development with clear contextual links. Origins of companies and the progression in the genre were considered with the reasons for changes (where appropriate). Relevant examples from appropriate works in the time period were used in support.

Less successful responses did not consider the development throughout the period. They were often restricted to the beginning or first half of the time period. They frequently focused on accounts of two or three practitioners' backgrounds with limited reference to their link to the changes or development. There were often inaccuracies in the knowledge and chronology. Examples, if given, usually lacked sufficient detail to support the point. Sometimes works were used which were not created or performed in the time period of the area of study.

Section B

The questions in Section B focused on the three set works and the choreographers. The students were required to show a relevant response to the question through a demonstration of:

- a knowledge and understanding of the features and form of each set work and of the style of the choreographer;
- a knowledge of contextual factors (where appropriate);
- the ability to analyse and interpret dances, providing **clear** examples;
- a clarity in the line of argument and in the written expression.

Question 7

The focus of the question was the analysis of the use of props in Ashton's choreography of *Cinderella*. Analysis of the props needed to relate to their support of the choreographic ideas. Therefore detailed examples from the choreography of *Cinderella* were needed.

Responses achieving marks in the higher bands identified a range of props with consideration and discussion of the different ways the props were used to convey the choreographic ideas eg to show character, relationships, mood or emotion; to progress the story or to provide humour. There were clear examples from the choreography with appropriate interpretations.

Responses with marks in the lower bands showed a limited and/or incorrect knowledge of the choreography of *Cinderella*. They were able to identify some props; however, there were few examples from the choreography to illustrate the use of these props. There were interpretations without supporting examples and little evidence of possible reasons for their use.

Question 9

This question required the consideration of a statement relating to the extent to which the choreography of *Beach Birds for Camera* showed evidence of links to the natural world.

Responses achieving higher marks identified the elements from the natural world which have influenced the choreography of *Beach Birds for Camera*. Examples from the choreography were given to show a clear link to the natural world and also examples where the link was less apparent. The significance of these examples in relation to the validity of the statement was discussed in order to arrive at a conclusion.

Responses achieving lower marks showed a limited knowledge of the work and little, if any, consideration of the statement. There was usually identification of bird images in relation to the work but other natural world elements were less evident. The examples were often vague and lacked clarity in terms of content and location in the work.

Question 11

This was a popular question focusing on the connection between the music and movement content in *Revelations*. Detailed movement examples from the set work were needed to support and clarify this connection.

The more successful responses were able to identify a range of music-movement relationships and give details of aspects of these connections. There was a sound knowledge of music terminology. Contextual links were made where appropriate and clear movement examples were given to illustrate the connection to the music.

The weaker responses merely identified the different song titles throughout the work and/or mentioned the themes/lyrics or Ailey's blood memories. Sometimes there was irrelevant information eg reference to the physical setting. Examples from *Revelations* were given but with little detail of movement content.

Questions 8, 10 and 12

These were popular questions, particularly for *Beach Birds for Camera* and *Revelations*. A key requirement of these questions was contextual knowledge and the response to these questions was encouraging. The acquisition of relevant knowledge has been supported by the solo practitioner performance requirement for the DANC4 practical examination.

The focus of each of these questions was the influences on the movement and choreographic styles of the choreographer. Identification and discussion of the influences were required, supported by clear examples from the set work and other works by the choreographer to show the connection between the influence and the stylistic feature.

The more successful responses showed a sound knowledge of a range of influences relating to the choreographer's life, background and career with accurate identification and detailed discussion. There were clear examples relating to movement or choreographic style features, which showed a clear connection to the influence. Examples were given from the set work and from other works by the choreographer.

The less successful responses identified some influences but gave little detail of their features. In some essays there was simply an account of everything known about the choreographer with little direct connection to the question. There were frequently inaccuracies in the knowledge and sometimes features were credited to the wrong influences. Examples from works were limited and often expressed in general terms. Only one other work was mentioned or none at all in some essays.

Centres are reminded that there are new areas of study and set works for 2013.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available at www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html .

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion