

GCE

Drama Example Materials

Candidate B - Example Work with Commentaries

Edexcel

GCE Drama (6DR01 paper 01)

2009

Oedipus Rex use of language.

<u>Name of character</u>	<u>Quotation</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Messenger	'He held them high in the air, at arms length, and plunged them down into his eyeballs... and stabbing his eyelids again and again, till his face was a mass of blood and tears.'	The messenger has used reported action for this section of the play. Mainly for emphasis. He has said it rather than Oedipus acting it out. This is better because for one thing you can put more detail into speech than actions and another thing it lets the audience create their own image in their mind. The messenger has used such graphic, detailed words to make the image of how Oedipus feels inside the audience's head.
Oedipus	'You have prayed to the gods. Now listen to me.'	Oedipus thinks he is at a higher status than the gods. Evidence of Oedipus's arrogance. Oedipus is basically saying that he has all the answers, even more than the gods themselves. His confidence in his language foreshadows later events. Events such as his decline, losing his friendship with others and blinding himself.
Oedipus	'My children' 'Anything I can do, I will do, of course'	Putting himself as a fatherly figure for everyone. He is a liar because he won't do anything he can do, he is selfless and un-thoughtful towards others. Oedipus' leadership is about himself and himself only, he says promises that he can't keep.

<u>Use of language</u>	<u>Character.</u>	<u>Quotation</u>	<u>Practical application</u>
Poetic dream language.	Mr and Mrs Samsa.	Mr. S: oh dear- that's bound to be someone from the warehouse/ Greta: The porter would have reported his failure to turn up/ Mrs. S: That porter was the boss's boot-licker, spineless and stupid, it's sure to be him.	[Very loud knock on the door, the family rise.][Three loud knocks] the family watch intently [followed by the Chief Clerk who makes a long entrance while the family speak- Sharing the next speech.] they take it in turns to say there thoughts about who they think is entering the room.
Poetic dream language	Mrs Samsa.	Mrs. s: For a few moments that morning I thought I was dreaming but the dream stayed.	Lights come up downstage... family in last positions. Frozen. Stood in line at down stage. Normal lighting to show normal present time. Mrs.s says this quote as if she couldn't believe what she is saying.
Choral speech	Mr and Mrs Samsa.	Mr. S: NO! Mrs. S: NO! Mr. S: Four o'clock Mrs. S: Four o'clock	The mime of family eating, looking up, wondering where Gregor is, in unison liked as a chorus. All using quick jolty actions along with the ticking of Gregor's clock.

Non - verbal Communication

Oedipus Rex

I have chosen the scene where Jocasta finds out the truth of Oedipus - pg 44. When Jocasta is talking to Oedipus she cannot look him in the eye because she is disgraced by herself of what she has done, her head facing down towards the floor indicates her embarrassment and shame. If Jocasta is sat down in this scene I would make her have her hands on her lap and her body still and rigid to show her shock, with these two practical applications it would create a big emotional impact on the audience and bring her and the audience together. To create more of an emotional impact between the audience and the actors I would make Jocasta speak in a low calm fashion to create contrast between the calm way in which she speaks and the raging angry feeling she has inside. To join all of these practical implications together there would be a successful, meaningful scene. To show the different status between Jocasta and Oedipus I would stage Jocasta sitting down and Oedipus standing up pacing up and down the room showing his determination.

Metamorphosis

In the scene where the lodgers come and visit the house Greta hardly says anything in their presence. I would make Greta stand behind her Mum or Dad to show her uncomfortable behaviour in front of the lodgers. The lack of eye contact between Greta and the lodgers is vital in this scene because it shows that Greta is scared and intimidated by the lodgers. When lodger number 1 says 'Look at it - it's probably suffering from disease!' I think Greta would step forward and show her confidence more than usual because they are talking about her brother in a disrespectful way and in the play Greta is the only one in the family that understands that the 'monster' is still family. Before the lodgers find out about Gregor Mr Samsa is telling them that they keep a pet in the back room, I would make Greta repetitively keep glancing at Gregor's door to show that she is worried that the lodgers may find out that it is more than a pet in the back room. In the whole scene Greta has the least confidence, status and power, to show this I would stage Greta and the lodgers at different ends of the stage to show their differences.

Vocal awareness.

Metamorphosis.

Throughout the passage I would make the pace and the volume increase to show Gregor getting slowly more impatient with himself as the waiting goes on.

At the start of the passage he is polite to the chief clerk but ~~as~~ further on he becomes more impatient and coltish, this is another reason to increase the pace and volume.

Sir, I'm just going to open the door - this very minute... slight illness - an attack of giddiness - kept me in my bed - getting up now - just a moment longer - sudden attack - be right as rain soon - no foundations in your reports - no-one said anything to me obviously you haven't looked at my last order - spare my parents - I'll catch the eight o'clock train - Don't let me detain you - please make my excuses to the chief.

The word 'going' show determination in his voice even though he might know about the beetle. He is determined to please the higher status characters in the play. I would use emphasis on this word to show the determination.

He is understating his illness to please the chief clerk. To make these two words stand out by making Gregor have a slight laugh when he says them to try and persuade the clerk, also it shows his nervousness.¹³⁶

An example of his coltishness at the end of the passage is the word obviously. If he was still calm he would have reverted back to calling the Chief Clerk sir but the language used is ~~more~~ less respectful than that.

Oedipus Rex Vocal awareness.

The word 'children' indicates his power and status, he is basically saying that everyone else is under his command.

My children. You are the modern descendants of King Cadmus, who founded the city...
And the sound of weeping. The air is heavy with incense and tears.
What more do you want?...

I would put emphasis on the word 'I' because he wants to show his power and his presence in front of the whole city. He wants everyone to do as he wishes, he also wants to be noticed.

I am Oedipus the king.
Everyone knows my name. You, sir, you are a priest, a man old enough to be wise and entitled to speak first. A sudden panic is it, or a demand for action? Anything I can do, I will do, of course.

A male unison voice would be perfect for the words 'king cadmus' because Oedipus is comparing himself to the previous king and he wants to show his masculinity and power.

These two words are meaningful and need to be presented in a strong way. The use of a calm male voice would create a good emotional value towards the audience.

For this line I would use a male choral voice because this is where Oedipus is making his grand entrance. This could be the most emphasized line in this section because of this.

The pace will be quite slow when he says this line so he makes an impression to his people.

The volume of his voice has risen at this point to try and make people believe him.

Characterisation

Oedipus rex

At the start of the play Oedipus is powerful and in control, this is at the point of his first speech. The first appearance of Creon makes him suspicious and confused because Creon mentions and warns him about King Laius.

After the first choral speech Oedipus changes from suspicious to frustrated because he feels everyone knows about Laius's death.

The first time we see Teiresias he blames Oedipus straight away for Laius's death and tells Oedipus that he is the unclean thing in the city. At this point Oedipus has become angry at Teiresias but he is wondering if it was actually him who killed the king.

When Oedipus blames Creon for what happened to the king he is totally in denial and has made himself believe that it wasn't him when actually it was. All the way through the play Oedipus believes that it wasn't him but when confronted with Jocasta telling him that someone was a witness at the death and they know who killed him Oedipus becomes scared which leads to Jocasta's death and the total decline for Oedipus.

Metamorphosis

At the start of the play Gregor is scared of what has happened to him overnight. He is also scared when his father first tries to get him out of his room because he does not want to be seen like that. Finally he comes out of his room and the whole family are horrified of what has happened to Gregor.

When the lodgers come to visit Gregor is a more determined character because he is against the concept of the lodgers coming to stay in his territory.

After this point in the play Gregor has become depressed of what he has turned into but because Greta has stayed with him and been supporting to Gregor he has become more hopeful and he is starting to see a more happier future for him, he believes he can get better.

During the whole play he is in fear of his father. The point comes where his father takes action and lets Gregor out of the room and traps him, his father wants him dead so he throws apples at his back to try and kill him. In the end Gregor has resorted back to being a depressed character in the play

Contextualising the play.

Metamorphosis

Berkoff's inspiration to play writing started when he was 18 or 19. He decided that acting was a suitable form of escapism because he was very isolated and bullied as a child. Berkoff believes that in a play there should be music, improvisation and dialogue, unlike Artaud who believed that a play should consist of dance, extreme visual images and absurd comedy. That's why in each play he wrote and performed in there were these elements.

Artaud thought that the audience should be trapped, enclosed, powerless and below. He used sophisticated lighting and very physical acting using masks and puppets, objects with strange proportions. You can see that Berkoff was influenced by Artaud in metamorphosis where Gregor Samsa used strange and very physical movements when being the beetle.

Capitalism is an economic system in which the control of production is in the hands of private individuals who are motivated to invest capital in the hope of a financial gain. Mr. S is an example of a capitalistic character in metamorphosis. One way in how he shows this is caring more about making money in his new job than caring for his son.

Oedipus Rex

Greek theatre in 420bc was an event that touched the whole nation. It was entertainment, a religious celebration and also education. An amphitheatre seated 8 - 12000 people. Obviously it would be quite nerve racking to act in front of this amount of people.

Sophocles had a growing disillusionment with the state of the country, now being ruled under the earliest idea of a democratic government. He was cynical of the politicians and the power they possessed, their self-interest and dismissive ness of the will of the people. This is where he got the idea of Oedipus' self believable character from. Sophocles is reflecting what he believed to be a spiritual decline in the behaviour of the country's leaders. The disease and famine that opens the play in an obvious metaphor to mirror the spiritual and moral decline of the state of Athens.

Jocasta's role in the play was an example of women in society in 420bc. She is a central part in the play but plays a minor part in the play. She had no power to stop Oedipus as a women but acted as a motherly role towards him and Creon together.

Oedipus Rex

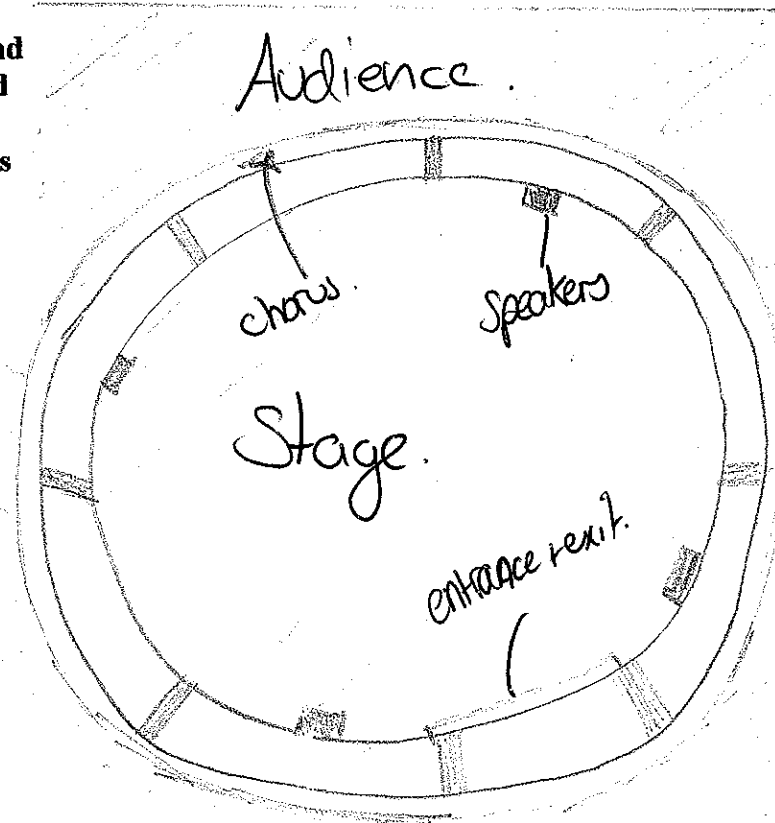
Visual, aural, spatial.

Costume

Oedipus will be dressed in long dark purple robes with a bright gold band. The colours of the robes show his arrogance, power and a sense of him being a superior character.

Jocasta will be dressed in a light blue robe and a yellow band. This shows her innocence and her mother like character.

Creon will be wearing a grey robe to show his normality. Even though he is not in the play that much, his costume foreshadows his leadership in the future.



At Jocasta's death, the chorus will be telling the story of how she died and Oedipus will be the only person on stage.

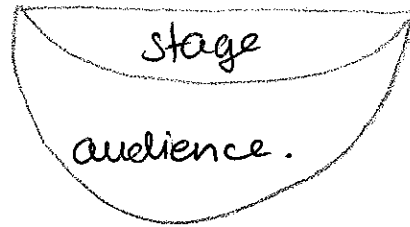
The play will be staged in a small studio seating around 60 to 100 people instead of 8000 to 12000. This increases the intimacy between the actors and the audience. I have set the stage in the round so the actors can act towards the gods and each other at any angle. Also it makes the actors feel claustrophobic and have the feeling of no escape.

At the messenger speech Oedipus' costume would have changed a lot in colour because this is one of the main parts of the decline for Oedipus in the play.

Metamorphosis.

Visual, aural, spatial.

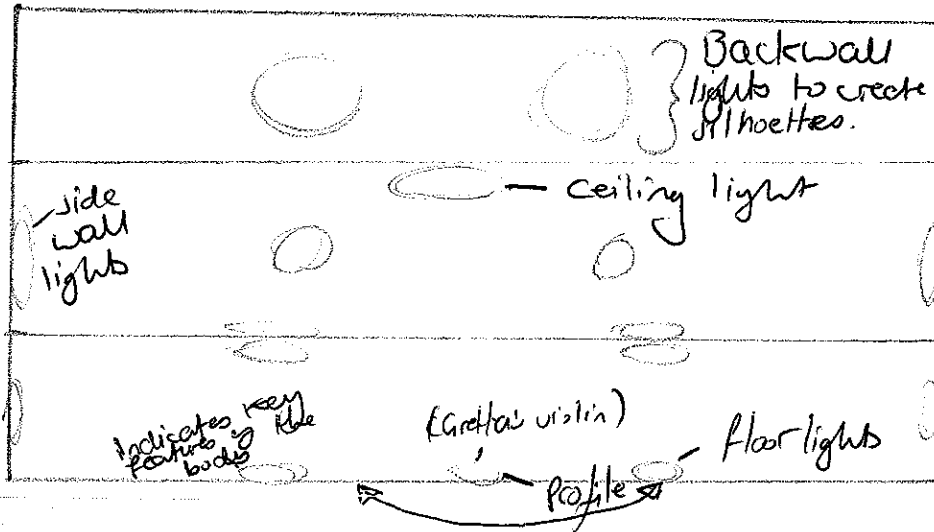
Bird's eye view.



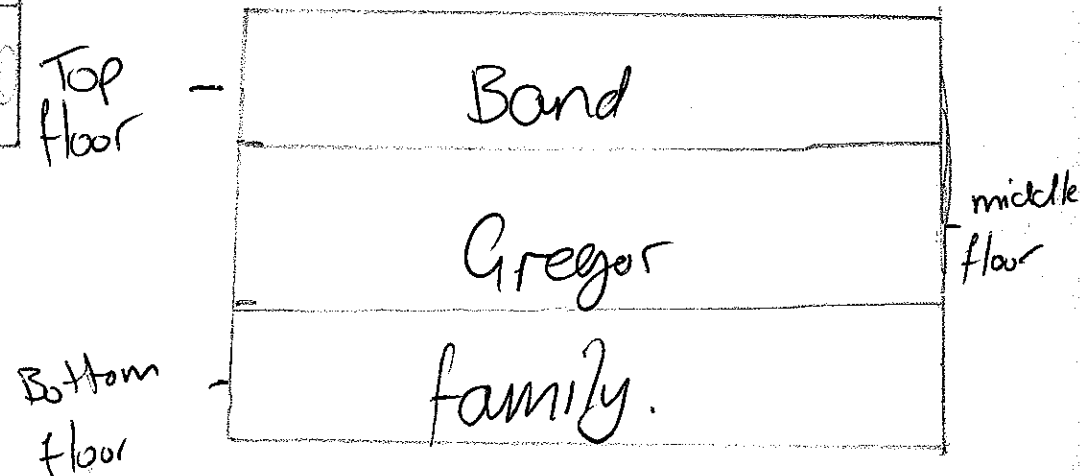
There will be live band on the top floor of the stage because it gives a natural feel. The music that is played will be 20th century modern music because it gives a diageitic sound. There are speakers set around the audience to create a surround sound effect.

The audience will be seated in a semi-circle shape around the stage so they can see at all angles apart from behind. The different levels will be curved like the audience so they can all be visible.

In the opening scene when you first experience Gregor as a beetle, the light shines from behind him casting a big shadow onto the audience. The silhouette that Gregor makes, makes him appear inhumane and the long shadows distort his facial features and emphasising his separation from the family in their well lit performance area.



Audience view.



Mr Samsa.

He will be in a suit throughout the play. The suit changes colour at the turning point of his life to raise his status because of his new job.

Gregor

Gregor wears everything white to show his difference between him and the family.

The response to practitioner

Oedipus and Kneehigh.

From the first choral ode there are a number of metaphoric images that can be interpreted into a style of Kneehigh.

Whilst being acted out on stage, the chorus could be on a swinging trapeze above the audience narrating the play. The volume of their voice will be loud and low pitched choral voice. The way in which they speak will be demanding and persuasive to show their authority. Whilst up on the trapeze the chorus could be playing their own instruments because in the Kneehigh theatre company most of the actors play their own instruments.

Kneehigh is known to be very much like pantomime and have a melodramatic storyline.

On this line 'Death in the womb, birth in the shadow.' I would make the actors on the stage create very obvious images to do with these themes of death and shadow. The result of this would be a very visually disturbing part of the play. On this line 'Will you not answer our cry?' I would make the actors say every line separately and after each line the chorus could repeat the words in a canon but in a totally opposite emotion to create a strong effect on the audience.

Metamorphosis and Artaud.

In the scene where the lodgers arrive at the house I would use dislocated images on every answer back towards the lodgers. For example if the lodgers say something towards Mr Samsa, he would return the answer in a dislocated image breaking the fourth wall whilst the rest of the actors are on stage.

When Mr Samsa is talking about the pet in the back room he will be very worried about the lodgers finding out about Gregor. To show this in an Artonian way I would make Mr Samsa use big, twitchy actions moving from one worried pose to another to show his internal feelings externally.

Another way to do this would be to keep the dislocated image but instead of using the jolty movements Mr Samsa could use voice. In a very loud, high pitched way he could make random weird noises directly at the audience, maybe go right up to one of the audience member's faces and create the strange, disturbing noises.

To be straight with you – theatre review.

There are many strengths and also quite a few faults in this piece that astounded and amazed and disappointed the audience. The part of the play that amazed me the most was the use of projection when the gauze was used to show a globe onto it. Inside the globe was a lecturer talking about the views on homosexuality in different countries and nationalities. Whenever he put his hand on the edge of the globe and slid his hand in different directions, the globe moved wherever his hand went. This was all done by exact timing which was the fascinating thing about it. This was a big amazement for the audience also for me because I have never seen anything like that in a live performance before. The different techniques used in the performance were very modern which would fascinate the older generation because they were brought up without modern technology we see today.

Another projection technique used in To Be Straight With You was the comic strip scene. This was where there was a man stood in front of the gauze and was walking on the spot. As he did this, the projection of the comic strip moved the opposite way in which he was facing and made it look as if he was walking through different comic book scenes.

Another strength of the piece was the actual stories used. In some of the scenes the narration was projected out of speakers on the stage. The effective thing was that it was the voice of the actual people of the stories. The audience gave a good reaction to this because the stories relate to the real world and societies issues. The chair dance was a light hearted, funny and interesting because whilst they were all doing a chair dance the main actor's voice was calm and stable, the contrast between the calm voice and the active actions was effective towards the audience.

The acting area does not change throughout the play. For instants the actors could have invaded the audience's space to make the production more intimate for the audience.

Depth was used in a good way and a bad way, for example the DJ box was private for the DJ but it was involved for everyone to see. Getting the DJ box onto the stage was clumsy and held up the time of the production which creates less interest from the audience.

The stage was a single set with the use of props around the edge also portable props to taken off and onto the stage. The backdrops changed during the piece, for example from the black board to the back alley

The costumes of the performers reflect on the characters. At the start the was a boy from the ghetto speaking in a Caribbean accent which was hard to understand and he was wearing clothes to fit his personality which made the audience feel weary of the character. Out of all of the characters the boy from the ghetto stands out from the rest of the characters.

The lighting of the production was amazing to watch and experience mainly because of the use of projection on to a black gauze.

The stage throughout the performance was lit with either lighting or projection techniques. The lighting of the production was used very effectively towards the mood of the play and it fit well to create a good atmosphere for each scene.

There wasn't much music involved in the performance more so than early noises and creepy sounds to create an effective mood, for example when the woman was spinning to show her confusion from her religion to the rest of the world. There were different types of music to fit the different genres of scenes. One thing that I didn't like about the music was that the actors did not contribute to the music with live singing and sounds.

There were many moments in the play when the character was shown through movement. The woman who was spinning around the stage was showing her views on sexuality and homosexuality. Another example of this was when the man was being beaten up by the other people on the stage and he was staying calm with his speech. The jolty movements show his fear and confusion about his 'problem' with homosexual or being a 'batty boy'. The skipping man was different because the skipping rope was almost creating a bubble around him saying that his emotions and feeling were kept to himself and they were not exposed to the outside world. The nimble, light jumps from the man contrasts with the complication of the skipping which made a great effect from the audience.

The name of the play says a lot of things. 'To be straight with you' means to tell the truth and not to be scared to show your true self to others even if it leads to being beaten up and abused by others who disagree on peoples decisions of life like the boy who revealed his secret to others and got beaten up. Also the use of the word straight kind of contradicts the concept of the theme of the play which is about homosexuality.

The overall result of the play was a success. My conclusion was made by my own views and also the audience reaction of the different emotions of different scenes. A lot of shocked faces and laughs and some cries made the result of the play a great success. Personally I think 'To be straight with you' was an effective play with a range of emotion and meaning.

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Candidate B - Commentaries

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Commentary on Exploration Notes for Candidate B:

Language:

The notes show that the candidate has worked practically on the language of these two texts. They explain what a performer might do when working on a play, particularly for *Metamorphosis*. However, the work deals with very few aspects of the language of both texts and does not explore how it develops over the whole play.

Non-verbal communication:

This section is an account of a scene for each play. It details how characters would relate and react to each other, with good justifications for the ideas. Both examples are very clear.

Vocal awareness:

The candidate has explored how two scenes can be performed. He has explained the way a range of tone, pace and volume can create meaning for an audience. There is considerable detail showing good understanding of each text and its possibilities.

Characterisation:

This section is weaker than the previous one. The candidate does not show us how he has come up with his ideas about each of the two characters he has chosen. This section is more English exercise than drama as there is little practical evidence of his understanding.

Social, cultural and political context:

The candidate calls this section, *contextualising the play*.

The section on *Metamorphosis* is the stronger of the two. There is some detail of how Berkoff and Artaud came about their ideas and what the background was for those. Some of the characters are placed in context. The second play, *Oedipus*, is less well understood and he does not prove how he has tried to find out the way the contexts of this text might be practically reflected within it.

Visual, aural and spatial elements of production:

There is some detail of how the candidate sees the plays in production. However, his responses are highly biased towards the visual elements. There are some clearly established ideas and some of these are explained in detail.

The response to a practitioner:

Some of the candidate's examples are explored in detail and show how he has used the ideas of Kneehigh and Artaud. However, there is no feeling for how Kneehigh might interpret a full production of *Metamorphosis* so it makes it difficult to get a feeling for what such productions would be like. There is also no clear evidence that the candidate fully understands how the ideas of Artaud could be employed.

Interpretation:

This section is missing although interpretation is inherent in other parts of the writing.

Moderator comments:

The candidate has produced an incomplete set of notes. Some sections show evidence of practical exploration, such as vocal awareness. Other sections do not fully develop the idea of the texts as pieces of drama.

The candidate should complete all sections of the notes and apply each element to both plays.

At present, band 4

Commentary on Theatre Review for Candidate B:

The candidate has clearly enjoyed the production.

He has separated some of the production elements from the physical performance and made links between them, eg the comic strip effect and how that made the man appear to be walking through the scene. He connects the narration with the audience's 'good' reaction and shows how the audience picked up on the relevance of the stories being told.

He makes clear how some of the design elements, such as the use of costume, contribute to the meaning the audience receives. He says that depth was 'used in a good and a bad way', noting how this aspect made the performance effective, but its use caused the performance to lose its pace.

Use of words like 'creepy' and 'eerie' to describe the sounds are well deployed to describe how music was involved.

He has a good grasp of what the performance was addressing but does not fully explore how successful it was and his evaluation of the work itself is incomplete. He has little grasp of the theatre form used in the performance and he does not explore its nature in sufficient depth to reach higher bands. However, this review has well-structured elements and has been organised in an effective way.

The quality of the written communication is satisfactory.

Band 4