



Pearson

Examiner's Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In Drama & Theatre (9DR0/02)
Component 2: Text In Performance

edexcel 

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9DR0.02 Text in Performance, None Examined Assessment **(NEA)**

This component is externally assessed.

In this component students are asked to develop and demonstrate theatre-making skills, working from two key extracts. They will explore how they realise artistic intentions in performance. Students can enter as either a **Performer or a Designer** or as a combination of these roles. There are two areas of focus.

1) A monologue or a duologue performance/design realisation from one key extract from one performance text.

2) A group performance/design realisation of one key extract from a different performance text.

Students may complete this component either as a performer or as a designer or combine these roles.

The design roles are:

- costume design
- lighting design
- set design
- sound design.

Centres wanting to offer design roles to students should refer to the specification, Appendix 3: Design roles minimum resource guidance for centres.

Centres are asked to complete a 9DR0A form for each candidate, include a Statement of Intention for the monologue/duologue and the group performance. Centres are advised to check that they are using the most current and up-to-date form as some administrative details will change during the life of a new specification.

Candidates must produce a Statement of Intention for both the group performance and the monologue/duologues. This is not an assessed part of the NEA. The Sol provides a dialogue between the candidate and the examiner of their intentions behind the portrayal, chosen style/genre and decisions made regarding the design or performance that may be pertinent to assessment.

Whilst this carries no discrete marks of its own, examiners report that the Sol offered insight into the chosen portrayal or design in context, supporting the examiner in placing the work in the correct level. Guidelines are set out on page 40 of the AL specification.

In **Section A**, students must work alone or in a pair on either a monologue or a duologue. Time limits for each are clearly detailed on page 35 of the specification. Performers are assessed out of 24 on Vocal and Physical Techniques, Characterisation, Communication, Interpretation and Artistic Intention. **(AO2)**

Designers are also assessed out of 24, on Design Skills, Application of Materials, Creative Choices, Understanding of Design Function and Purpose and Creative Intent. **(AO2)**

The Designer has a choice of either Set, Costume, Lighting or Sound for both the Group Performance and the Monologue or Duologue.

In **Section B**, students work on a group performance. Time limits and group sizes are clearly set out on page 36 of the specification. Performers are assessed on 3 assessment areas, each worth up to 12 marks, up to a maximum of 36. The assessment areas are Vocal and Physical skills, Characterisation and Communication and Interpretation and Realisation of Artistic Intentions. **(AO2)**

Designers are also assessed on 3 assessments areas - their design Skills using materials within time and resource constraints, Design in Context and Communication as well as Interpretation and Realisation of Artistic Intentions. **(AO2)**

Marks for this NEA component are awarded as follows:

Monologue/Duologue/Design	24
Group Performance/Design	36
Total marks for Component 2	60

Students are assessed as **performers/designers in a text in performance (AO2)**. Marking criteria is set out on pages 42-53 of the A Level specification.

Centres must refer to the Administrative Support Guide for guidance in completing preparation of their candidates and the paperwork for this component. All the requisite forms are available on the AL section of the Pearson website. It is required for all components and includes information about all of the assessment procedures. It is updated annually with forms and deadlines that apply to the administration of all three components.

Additionally, centres are reminded that there are a number of resources available to support centres delivering the 2016 specification. Online support material is also available through the Pearson/Edexcel website.

'**Ask the Expert**' support service provides centres with answers and information regarding common issues, misconceptions or queries. Centres are also advised that the FAQ page is updated regularly and designed to answer questions regarding the delivery of the specification. It is important centres look at support materials, as this will help them gauge the expected standard and requirements of this component.

The web address is:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/drama-and-theatre-2016.html>

This report is designed to feedback to centres on the delivery of Component 2 and address some of the issues raised by both centres and examiners. It will report on the successes in the first year, as well as celebrating the work of candidates.

We are pleased to report most centres had the benefit of a visit by an examiner in the first year to support the security of the examination.

Examiners reported seeing a full range of marks this season. There were instances of full marks being awarded for both the group performance and the monologues/duologues, as well as candidates receiving marks in the limited level. 0 marks were received for monologues/duologues only where work fell under the regulatory minimum time limit as set out on page 35 of the specification.

Most centres had read the specification for A Level and the ASG, and had therefore prepared candidates appropriately for assessment. However, some centres failed to complete the

correct forms, to send the correct paperwork at all or on time. Therefore, candidates were sometimes equally unprepared and produced limited work, or work that did not meet the minimum regulatory requirements.

It cannot be stressed enough how important it is for centres to read the specification and support materials each year, creating a performance that aims to meet the criteria for assessment first and foremost.

There now follows some specific observations from the examination team, based on the observations of Visiting Examiners and the Senior Team in 2018.

Component 2: Text in Performance

Text Extracts

Students must study 2 key extracts from 2 different performance texts. A key extract in this case is a scene, moment or collection of moments significant to the text. Centres may select a continuous dialogue or scene or edited extracts for the group performance.

For the monologue/duologue the extract can be edited to provide the right amount of material and remain a coherent performance. The performance texts selected by Centres for Section A and Section B must differ, either in terms of era, convention or genre, themes, form/structure or style, playwright(s) and/or context.

Centres are allowed to choose different performance texts for each group and each monologues/duologue, candidates do not need to all study the same texts or extracts. Centres must complete a form regarding text choice, as detailed on page 7 of the specification, this is then checked by members of the Senior Examining Team. Drama Assessment are collating a list of forbidden texts for Centres to refer to for future series.

All of the requirements for this component are detailed in the A Level specification. See pages 34 – 38 for further details.

The holistic approach to the specification means that the knowledge and understanding acquired through the study of one key extract from a performance text in Component 1 can be applied to assist in the interpretation, development and realisation of key extracts from contrasting performance texts. Similarly, the understanding of creating a performance can inform Sections B and C in Component 3.

The teaching hours spent directing the Section B group performance or time spent facilitating Section A monologues/duologues and wider reading on the texts from which the chosen extracts have been selected should address the implication and impact of social, historical and cultural contexts on the chosen texts and extracts.

There is a **free choice** of 2 texts for centres, within constraints. The text extracts selected must meet the criteria given on page 34 of the specification. They must be from plays professionally published, substantial and have a running time of at least 60 minutes to provide sufficient depth and offer students the opportunity to demonstrate exploratory range and depth that is appropriate to the demands of A Level study. Examiners report that there were some cases where this was not the case, for example performance texts from playwrights such as D.M. Larson, Gabriel Davis or downloaded/found in anthology books as stand-alone monologues.

Similarly, Centres which invented characters, for example, in performances like Shakers where there were five waitresses instead of 4, disadvantaged candidates as they were unable to detail in any depth their characters in the Sol and it was difficult for the examiner to see how the performance placed *the key extracts in the context of the whole performance texts* (page 36 of the specification).

The **choice of performance text** must also offer opportunity for students to respond as either performer and/or designer. The requirement that the texts in Component 2 must be different from the texts studied in Components 1 and 3, and the vast majority of centres adhered to this requirement.

The selected extracts must also not be from any texts on the **prescribed lists** from Component 3. Whilst this was facilitated by the new **Text Choices submissions** made by centres online, there were instances where centres did not adhere to these rules, in particular *Antigone* and *Equus* were performed as group performances by centres. Whilst this was accommodated in the first year of the AL examination, this will not be the case in future series and it is likely that candidates will receive 0 marks for these performances.

There were instances of candidates performing texts as a group and a monologue or duologue which did not offer a great breath of experience, for example an extract from **4:48 Psychosis** as a monologue and **Five Kinds of Silence** as a group performance. Whilst not specifically prohibited, this combination was not felt to offer candidates a breadth of texts and experience.

Unlike Components 1 and 3, centres do not need to select a specific practitioner or style of performance for this component, but there is an expectation that *interpretations must include placing the key extracts in the context of the whole performance texts*.

Popular texts for Group Performances included *Five Kinds of Silence*, *Girls Like That*, *Memory of Water*, *The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband*, *The Pillowman*, *Metamorphosis*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Monster*, *Abigail's Party*, *Find Me*, *Grimm's Tales* or *Rats Tales*, *Pool (No Water)*, *Tissue*, *How to Disappear Completely*, *Bull*, and *My Mother Said*.

Popular texts for Monologues or Duologues included *Things I Know to be True*, *Blackout*, *Goodbye Charles*, *East*, *4:48 Psychosis*, *Our Country's Good*, *Taking Care of Baby*, *Daisy Pulls It Off*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night time*, *A Doll's House*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* and various texts by Shakespeare.

Quality of recordings, group sizes and timings:

The majority of centres provided recordings that were clear in terms of visual and audio quality. The most effective recordings began with a clear image of the group in a long shot and candidates were then introduced by name and candidate numbers. Centres that used identification placards or an on-screen sign-systems provide the examiner with a helpful visual aid for monitoring purposes. Examiners reported that it was effective when candidates introduced themselves by name, number, character and distinguishing features/costume choices. The use of digital file chapters is another useful tool.

Centres are reminded that further guidance on 'Best practice when recording performance' is available on page 80 of the AL specification (Appendix 4).

The recording is an essential tool for monitoring or in case of an Enquiry After Results, centres are advised to do as much as possible to ensure the quality of the recording is as high as possible. The camera should be in a position to capture the dynamics and details of the performance. Where the camera and the examiners were given 'the best seat in the house' this supported the examiners and the monitoring team in seeing the performance as best intended by the teacher-director. Examiners reported there were instances that felt like the examination came second to the performance elements or audience experience. Some centres used dim lighting to create mood/atmosphere, limiting how much examiners could see of facial expressions and candidates themselves, or loud music was used to underscore action

which drowned out candidates' dialogue.

Where USB/DVD marking had to occur due to examiner illness or for a small number of overseas centres there was a particular issue with faces bleached out by bright lighting states. Similarly, the camera being set too close meant not taking in the width of the stage/all candidates or the recording was too distant, so that detail could not be seen by examiners, which disadvantaged candidates as the full evidence for AO2 could not be seen.

Several candidates chose to stage their performances in a promenade style and centres are strongly encouraged to remember the importance of the recording. The monitoring of examiner marks is completed using the recording, and therefore the camera needs to have the 'best seat in the house', preferably as close to the examiner's view as possible.

To improve the overall quality of recordings:

- Centres should avoid low-lighting levels as candidates must be clearly seen on the recording
- Ensure white-light does not bleach out facial expressions
- Make sure that music/sound is not played too close to the camera/microphone as this sound often dominates/impairs vocal clarity in performance
- Check the camera is placed in a strong position to capture the performance
- Consider using costume to visually distinguish each candidate
- Ensure that the microphone/sound recording is effective, prior to performance.

Performance evidence for this component arrived in a variety of digital formats and centres are reminded to check all USB/DVD recordings, prior to despatch. Centres are reminded that it is not a requirement to encrypt or password protect USB drives. Centres should simply work within the parameters of their own child and data protection policies.

Centres are reminded to ensure performance times and group sizes comply with the requirements of the specification. Details are outlined on pages 35 and 36 of the specification and further exemplified in the ASG.

It is pleasing to report that examiners found no reported cases of students having to be awarded 0 marks for Group work produced failing to meet the minimum Ofqual regulatory minimum performance time of 6 minutes.

Sadly, in spite of clear guidance in the Specification, Administrative Support Guide, on Ask the Expert, as well as through the various Pearson social media platforms, nearly all examiners reported seeing a monologue/duologue that had failed to meet the Ofqual regulatory minimum performance time of 2 minutes for a monologue or 5 minutes for a duologue.

Centre Visits

To facilitate an equality of experience for all candidate and parity with other subjects, examiners are not able to speak to candidates - other than to identify them in performance. Most centres understood this and were supportive, however, there were still instances of centres asking when examiners would meet the candidates to speak to them.

It is clear most centres had read and understood the Safeguarding policy, which is in place to protect candidates and examiners. Unfortunately, there were rare occasions where examiners were met at reception by students to escort them to the performances or where candidates were left with examiners before performances for identification purposes. It is essential that examiners are not placed in this situation.

Many thanks to the vast majority of centres who provided a desk, lamp and space for examiners in which to complete their marking during the examination session in the auditorium. Similarly, a private space to go to between performances is always appreciated by examiners, allowing them to check their marks against the National Standard, whilst providing centres with the opportunity to reset the performance space.

Many centres have understood the need to differentiate between candidates for examiners, providing clear, at a glance differences between candidates, even those in an ensemble. However, examiners reported instances of a cast of identically dressed, made up and hair styled gender non-specific performers with a small ankle ribbon as the defining means of identification. Centres are strongly encouraged to not dress and make-up candidates identically, but to look for creative solutions to ensemble work in costuming their examination.

It was much appreciated by examiners that centres responded positively to the request for an agreed start/end indication for the monologue/duologue performances. These ranged from lights up/down, a beep from a centre timer or a signal from the teacher, all worked well. Centres are reminded to provide access to full scripts on the night for both the group performance and the monologue/duologues. It is not necessary to send a full script prior to the visit. Bulky photocopies of extracts or an entire script are an unnecessary waste in this case.

After the Visit

Most centres sent the recording within the 7 working day time limit. Where Easter fell this sometimes meant this was actually 3 weeks. It was much appreciated where centres were able to send recordings as soon as possible, to aid the monitoring process in the first year of the specification.

This was the first year that USB were acceptable media to send recordings. Many centres sent USB sticks. It is no longer required for these to be encrypted or password protected prior to sending. Examiners reported in this first year that USB were easy to send and access, making them the preferred media for recordings.

Audiences

Most centres chose to have an audience of family, friends and other candidates for the Group Performances, in smaller centres this was for both the group and the monologue/duologue performances. Examiners reported that larger centres often chose to separate the group performances from the monologue/duologues. The group performances were usually performed in the evening to a larger audience, with monologue/duologue performances often in the school day to other drama classes. In a few instances, the school classes did not provide an appropriate audience. This was either because they were disruptive (examiners reported audience members were on phones or talking) or did not understand the performances and could not be supportive.

There were also evening performances where the audience did not appreciate the examination conditions required, with audience entering/leaving throughout and providing a noisy distraction.

Audiences do not need to be silent to support candidates, indeed there were many instances of supportive audiences at comic performances who were receptive and laughing. Where centres had a well-chosen or well-prepared audience who understood the themes or issues, this allowed a clear appreciation and supportive environment for the examination and candidates.

Centre good practice

Many centres ran their examination visits with calm fluidity, having clearly rehearsed the set-up between all performances, candidate introductions with the camera and had prepared the positioning for the camera/examiner. Examiners noted in these centres that candidates appeared more relaxed and were able to concentrate on their examination itself.

Where centres provided photographs of candidates in costume for the performances, this made identification and the monitoring process easier for the examiner and was much appreciated.

Candidates seemed more confident in centres where the teacher had played a key role in the direction of the group piece, and groups had not been left to self-direct. It was clear many centres had selected monologues/duologue performances which well exceeded the minimum regulatory requirements, to support candidates in achieving the minimum regulatory time limits. This meant if candidates speeded up due to nerves, there was a 'buffer' meaning they did not dip below the regulatory minimum performance limit. Any work that exceeded the maximum performance time was not credited by examiners.

Monologues or Duologues

As with the legacy specification, there were still occurrences of monologues performed in a style of 'direct address' usually performed to the audience and/or at the examiner. This can disadvantage candidates if this would not reflect an *understanding of the playwright's intentions* within a performance of the text as a whole. Candidates were most successful where the other character(s) being addressed was clearly indicated within the performance space by the candidate.

A full range of work was seen by the examining team. Lower level work was found to demonstrate some or all of the following characteristics;

- The Monologue/Duologue is under the regulatory time limit
- There was a lack of vocal or physical technique or variety
- The text selected by the candidate lacked depth, or was too challenging or was too removed from the experience of the candidate for it to be effective
- The candidate was uneasy, lacked confidence or rushed the material

Examiners reported much work was a joy to watch, with candidates fully embracing the challenge of the examination and meeting criteria in creative and exciting ways. Characteristics of top level work included;

- Monologue/Duologue meets the regulatory time limit and does not exceed the maximum
- There is a range of vocal and physical technique evidenced
- Text selected by candidate/teacher is sufficiently challenging, has depth and relates to the experience of the candidates making it effective
- Candidates are confident and appear to enjoy or make the most of their performance time

Group Performances

Examiners reported that Group Performances, and therefore candidates, were most effective where teachers had chosen appropriate texts for their cohort – be that stylistically, in length or in roles for candidates. Texts that had been chosen as a 'vanity project' by the teacher or were carried over from the Legacy Specification and did not engage candidates were reported to be less successful by examiners. On a positive note, even in these cases, examiners reported that candidates appeared engaged in the creative process.

There were some variations of staging seen by examiners, with the influence of practitioners used in Component 1 and 3 perhaps influencing the staging choices. In these instances, audiences and examiners were generally well considered and were able to follow all of the action.

Lower level work was found to demonstrate some or all of the following characteristics;

- The candidate follows the ensemble, lacking attack/purpose/energy
- The performance lacks sense of ownership by candidates
- The text selected by the teacher(s) is too challenging or simplistic for the cohort

- There is a lack of vocal or physical technique and/or variety
- The role(s) in the group performance did not allow enough depth of characterisation or the candidate relies on the basic and obvious
- The candidate was not given sufficient stage time or too much stage time and was unable to maintain role, energy or dramatic tension
- The communication with the rest of the cast and the audience is limited
- The candidate lacks confidence or was uneasy and/or performed behind the cast/flow of the performance

Examiners reported that there were many innovative and effective performances, where the focus had been the strengths of the cohort, with the candidates understanding the material and engaging with it. Characteristics of top level work for group work included;

- The candidate was capable of leading the ensemble, with commitment, purpose and energy
- The performance had a real sense of ownership for the candidates, they were engaged with the text, which had been explored and/or was within the sphere of their experience
- The text selected by teacher(s) was appropriate in challenge for the cohort
- There was a real range of vocal and physical technique demonstrated
- Their role allowed depth of characterisation and/or the candidate was able to multi role with confidence and distinction
- The candidates were given appropriate stage time and were therefore able to maintain their role(s), energy or dramatic tension
- The communication within the cast and the audience was sophisticated, and the candidates were well rehearsed and slick
- The candidates were confident and performed with focus

Design Candidates

There were instances of candidates for each design option for both Group Performance and monologue/duologues. In this first year of the specification, candidates did take the opportunity to both perform and design, in these cases the more common pathway was to design for the group performance and perform a monologue.

Lower level Design work was found to demonstrate some or all of the following characteristics;

- The design did not enhance the performance for the audience
- The technical skill is limited and/or feels like it has not been worked on for the length of the rehearsal period
- The Design is not integral to the piece and feels like an afterthought or that the designer has worked in isolation from the performers
- The design lacked context, a sense of genre or style and/or link to the playwright's intentions of the piece
- The creative choices were obvious, limited or lack depth and detail

Characteristics of top level Design work for group work included;

- The design fully enhanced the performance for the audience
- The technical skill is sophisticated and has clearly been worked on throughout the rehearsal period, not as a bolt-on
- The Design is integral to the piece and feels at the heart of the creative process and the designer has clearly worked with the performers
- The design has context, with a sense of genre or style and/or a link to the playwright's intentions for the piece
- The creative choices are sophisticated, authentic and with depth and detail

International Centres

It is now a regularity requirement that all International Centres for A Level and GCSE have a visiting examiner unless there are specific or extenuating circumstances. These visits were carried out by a small team of examiners, some of whom were trained in both GCSE and A Level examining and were able to work at both levels in the same centre or region. There was

a degree of co-ordinating that took place to ensure that some examiners were able to visit more than one centre in the same region on the same visit. This was not, however, not always possible, for a number of logistical reasons but, almost without exception, all International Centres received a visiting examiner.

This team of examiners reported a similar range of text choices seen for both sections of the examination as previously mentioned in this report. In addition, there were particularly engaging performances of *The Trojan Women*, *The Pillowman*, *The Children's Hour*, *Women of Lockerbie*, *Death and the Maiden* and *After Miss Julie*.

The vast majority of centres had accessed the ASG and were able to provide the examiner with the correct paperwork in time for the visit. There was, however, some confusion from some International centres about the final deadline for submission of recorded performances and/or materials but, hopefully, this will not be the case in the second year of the specification.

The evidence was that candidates had been well-prepared for the examination and supported through the process by the teacher(s). Where this was not the case, it was for similar reasons to those mentioned previously in this report with, for example the choice of the text for the group performance appearing to have been chosen without the specific needs and abilities of the group in mind. Whilst this is A Level work and there needs to be challenges to reflect that, there were reported instances of texts that were beyond the capabilities of the group.

Centres are encouraged to revisit the ASG and other materials on the Pearson Edexcel website in order to start to plan for the 2019 series.

Administration

There is little by way of administration for 9DR0/02 and this guidance is designed to ensure that all administration for this component is correct.

Edexcel/Pearson is aware that some forms and administration requirements have changed since the launch of this specification and centres are thanked for their cooperation and advised to regularly visit the Edexcel homepage and ASG to ensure that the documentation being used is the most current version.

As a result of centre requests and work seen, a list of 'forbidden' texts will be placed on the website.

The 15-minute arrival time prior to exams as detailed in the ASG will become 30 minutes. Centres became worried when examiners did not arrive 30 minutes prior and/or if there was heavy traffic this provided less margin for error

Consortium centres

Examiners have seen a definite increase in consortium centres for the new AL specification. To support the inputting of individual centre and candidate marks in this case, examiners noted it was very helpful where centres had included each centre number with the candidate numbers for that centre on the centre register. This is in addition to Exams Officers reporting this to Pearson Edexcel.

The Principal Examiner and the examining team would like to take this opportunity to thank centres and candidates for all of their work in this first season of 9DR0/02.

