



GENERAL COMMENTS

Most students displayed an understanding of the key knowledge and skills specified for each of the examinable outcomes. The majority of students responded to all the questions on the examination paper. Some students were inconsistent in their responses, receiving very high marks for one question and none for another. In general, students' handwriting allowed assessors to read their responses, however in a number of cases expression and spelling were poor.

Areas of strength and weakness

Common areas of strength were:

- a thorough understanding of the requirements of each question
- sound knowledge and use of drama specific terminology
- the ability to clearly distinguish between the terms 'describe', 'evaluate', 'analyse' and 'discuss'
- clear, concise responses to questions
- a good understanding of the key skills and knowledge embedded in the course
- effective use of relevant examples to support answers.

Common areas of weakness were:

- over-answering of a question, often leaving insufficient time for remaining questions
- a limited understanding of the terms subject matter and theatrical conventions
- misunderstanding of drama specific terminology
- limited understanding of the key skills and knowledge embedded in the course
- an inability to use specific examples to support a response.

Teachers should ensure that students are thoroughly prepared to answer questions relating to all examinable outcomes from Unit 3 and Unit 4.

Advice for students

Students should carefully read each question, and pay particular heed to any words that are highlighted in bold in the question. Students should note the allocation of marks for each question and use this as a guide to determine the appropriate depth and length of their responses. Students need to ensure they know the difference between dramatic elements, theatrical conventions and stagecraft elements.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

The examination paper did not specify that a particular style of written response was required. Responses could be essays, short answers, in point form or a combination of these forms. Illustrations and annotations were also acceptable responses. Illustrations were used appropriately by some students to answer questions, mainly Question 1. Most students answered the paper in the order in which it was set out although a small number of students answered the questions in a different order, which was quite acceptable.

Section A

Question 1

This question related to the ensemble performance in Unit 3.

Question 1a

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	4	8	19	25	43	3.0

Question 1a required students to focus on the development of their ensemble performance, and to explain how subject matter from a variety of sources was used to develop two characters. Students tended to over-answer this question. Although students were not required to write about their own characters in the ensemble, many chose to do this.

A high-rating response was characterised by:

- a clear knowledge of how subject matter can be used to create characters
- subject matter from a variety of sources being clearly defined and explained in terms of the development of characters

2004 Assessment Report



- good choice of pertinent examples to support the response.

A low-rating response was characterised by:

- lack of discussion about the development of characters
- a listing of subject matter or sources without explanation
- generalised responses without pertinent examples to support the response
- discussion of only one character
- poor understanding of how subject matter can be used to develop characters
- a misunderstanding of the term 'develop'.

Question 1b

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	4	8	16	17	22	13	20	3.7

Question 1b required students to give three examples of how expressive skills, other than voice, were used to enhance the non-naturalistic style of the ensemble performance they had developed in Unit 3.

A high-rating response was characterised by:

- an analytical rather than descriptive approach
- a clear knowledge of how non-naturalism can be used to create character
- a good understanding of a range of expressive skills and their applications.

A low-rating response was characterised by:

- the choice of a naturalistic rather than a non-naturalistic character
- a descriptive rather than analytical approach
- choosing to write about voice.

Question 1c

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	4	2	5	7	14	14	19	15	20	5.4

Question 1c required students to analyse how two dramatic elements and two stagecraft elements were used in their ensemble performance.

A high-rating response was characterised by:

- an analytical rather than descriptive approach
- a clear knowledge of a range of dramatic and stagecraft elements
- a good understanding of a range of applications for dramatic and stagecraft elements
- a good understanding of how dramatic and stagecraft elements were applied to the student's ensemble performance.

A low-rating response was characterised by:

- confusion between dramatic elements, stagecraft elements and performance style(s)
- a descriptive rather than analytical approach.

Question 2

Play Chosen	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
%	2	29	11	25	13	20	1

Question 2 was based on a selected play from the 2004 Drama Playlist. The most commonly chosen play for the question was *The Ishmael Club* (29%), followed by *The Collapsible Man* (25%), *Dead Tragic* (20%), *The Minds War Made* (13%) and *The Soul Miner* (11%).

Question 2a

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	6	9	23	24	39	2.8

Question 2a required students to analyse how one character was represented in the performance. Students were required to refer to at least two dramatic and/or stagecraft elements; they could refer to two stagecraft elements, or two dramatic elements, or one of each. Two marks were allocated for each element that was appropriately analysed.

2004 Assessment Report



Generally this question was well answered, although in some cases it was over-answered leaving students with little to say when responding to the following questions which were worth more marks. Some students would have benefited from better revision as their responses indicated that they had forgotten much of the detail about the play they had seen in first semester. These students did not have enough specific information or examples to achieve full marks for this question. Some students seemed confused about the difference between dramatic elements, stagecraft elements and theatrical conventions, and there was some misunderstanding of the term 'representation'.

Students should know that dramatic elements include climax, conflict, contrast, mood, rhythm, sound, space, symbol, timing, tension and focus in ensemble performance. Stagecraft elements include direction, costume, lighting, set design, sound, make-up and properties to define and enhance non-naturalistic ensemble performance.

A high-rating response was characterised by:

- a balanced discussion where the student analysed one character in relation to two dramatic and/or stagecraft elements
- a clear understanding of how stagecraft can be used to add meaning to character
- two clear examples of dramatic elements and/or stagecraft skills
- appropriate use of terminology
- an analytical rather than descriptive approach.

A low-rating response was characterised by:

- discussion of only one element
- discussion of dramatic/stagecraft elements without reference to characters
- lack of appropriate vocabulary
- confusion between dramatic elements, stagecraft elements and theatrical conventions
- general discussion of stagecraft in the play without reference to a specific character
- generalised statements that were not supported by examples.

Question 2b

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	6	5	14	20	26	14	15	3.6

Question 2b required students to analyse how two non-naturalistic theatrical conventions were used in a play selected from the playlist. Up to three marks were awarded for each theatrical convention analysed. Many students were confused about non-naturalistic theatrical convention terminology, which was surprising as a list of theatrical conventions was included in Question 4b. Students who had used the reading time carefully should have been aware of this list.

A high-rating response was characterised by:

- an analytical approach
- pertinent examples of non-naturalistic theatrical conventions
- a high level of detail
- a clear understanding of relevant theatrical conventions
- good knowledge of ways that theatrical conventions can be applied to performance.

A low-rating response was characterised by:

- a descriptive rather than analytical approach
- a lack of understanding of non-natural theatrical conventions
- a lack of detail
- misunderstanding of 'theatrical conventions'
- confusion between stagecraft elements and theatrical conventions
- discussion of space as a theatrical convention.

Question 2c

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	16	7	14	13	15	10	12	4	9	3.5

Question 2c required students to analyse how non-naturalistic stagecraft elements gave meaning to the theme(s) of the play. Students were required to analyse more than one stagecraft element in relation to at least one theme. Students who discussed two or more themes were more successful when answering this question than students who only identified



one theme in the play. In general, two marks were awarded for each appropriate example analysed, however where a student had less than four examples but a more detailed analysis, full marks were still awarded. Students appeared to find this the most difficult question on the examination to answer successfully; it was the most commonly unanswered question, and 16% of students were not awarded any marks for this question.

A high-rating response was characterised by:

- a clear understanding of the themes of the play
- a good knowledge of how stagecraft can enhance the themes of a play
- pertinent examples to support the student's analysis
- either a very detailed response with few examples or a less detailed response with a wider range of examples
- use of appropriate stagecraft terminology.

A low-rating response was characterised by:

- lack of knowledge of the themes of the play
- limited understanding of how stagecraft elements can be used to add meaning to themes
- poor knowledge of stagecraft elements
- a descriptive rather than analytical approach
- a brief or unfinished response.

Section B

Question 3

Character Chosen	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
%	1	9	7	4	9	13	11	18	12	10	8

Question 3 related to the development of the student's solo performance in Unit 4. The most commonly written about prescribed character was 'the Diva' (18%), followed by 'the Knight' (13%), 'the Freedom Fighter' (12%), 'an Oompa-Loompa' (11%), 'the Showman' (10%), 'Shaun' (9%), 'the Player' (9%), 'Captain Holly Short' (8%), 'the persona of the bow of the Argo' (7%) and 'Jung Chang' (4%).

Although students were asked to write the name of the character in their script books, a small number did not and the character could not be determined from their response.

Question 3a

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	3	5	11	20	23	16	22	3.9

Question 3a focused on the construction techniques the student used when creating his/her solo performance character. Students were required to discuss more than one construction technique. Many students listed their research as a construction technique but did not reflect on how they used this research to create their performance. A variety of both simple and complex construction techniques were used in student responses, ranging from research and improvisational and scripting activities, to trial performances and feedback.

A high-rating response was characterised by:

- identification of a variety of construction techniques and a description of how these assisted in the creation of the solo performance
- a balanced discussion of how specific construction techniques aided the student in making choices when developing the performance to its final form
- clear examples of each construction technique and its effectiveness in the creation of the solo performance
- a good knowledge of how construction techniques can be used to develop a performance
- use of appropriate terminology.

A low-rating response was characterised by:

- no clear indication of which character was being discussed
- a list of construction techniques but no discussion
- a lack of knowledge of construction techniques
- no reference to character(s) development.

2004 Assessment Report



Question 3b

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	9	6	16	19	18	13	19	3.5

In Question 3b students had to explain how and why they manipulated stagecraft to enhance the non-naturalistic performance style of their solo performance. Some students felt that they could not discuss costume as they had chosen to wear theatre blacks, however this was an appropriate stagecraft choice for discussion; a choice to use minimal stagecraft is still a choice.

A high-rating response was characterised by:

- an analytical response which included both how and why the student manipulated stagecraft
- knowledge of the stagecraft elements
- a good understanding of how and why stagecraft elements are applied to a performance
- discussion of more than one stagecraft element.

A low-rating response was characterised by:

- confusion between stagecraft elements and theatrical conventions
- a brief response listing the stagecraft used but no analysis
- a brief response stating that no stagecraft was used
- no reference to manipulation
- a lack of knowledge about how dramatic elements can be applied to performance.

Question 4

Question 4 included two parts and required an analysis of the processes involved in developing a solo performance. Students were required to examine the illustration provided and consider how the image could be used to develop a solo performance. Students should have been able to draw on key knowledge and skills acquired through the development of their own solo performance in Unit 4. Very few students ran out of time, but some did and as a result their answers were brief or incomplete. Less than five per cent of students did not complete Question 4. In answering this question, students needed to be clear that they were referring to a solo rather than an ensemble performance.

Question 4a

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	2	2	11	19	30	20	17	4.0

In Question 4a students were required to describe two characters who might inhabit the world of this image and discuss the role of these characters in the solo performance. This image was chosen because it did not have any characters present and therefore allowed students greater flexibility in developing imaginative ideas for characterisation. Surprisingly, the majority of students described their two characters as an old man who lived/worked in the hut on the pier, and a younger man, often a relative with a more positive outlook on life, who had come to visit him. More creative responses included the personification of inanimate objects. An indication of the narrative of the solo was common. Students tended to describe the two characters well, but the discussion of the role of the characters in the performance was generally much weaker. A maximum of four marks could be awarded for discussion of character without discussion of role; two marks were available for each character and one for each role.

A high-rating response was characterised by:

- a clear understanding that this was a solo, not an ensemble, performance
- an insightful and creative response to the image
- balanced discussion of two characters, including their relationship and roles
- clear reasons that justified the choice of characters in relation to the image
- an analytical observation of the picture, looking beyond the literal.

A low-rating response was characterised by:

- confusion between solo and ensemble performances
- no discussion of the relationship or roles of the characters
- lack of character detail
- lack of relationship to stimulus image
- simple story telling with minimal reference to characters.

2004 Assessment Report



Question 4b

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	5	4	15	21	25	14	16	3.7

In Question 4b students were required to choose two of the listed theatrical conventions and explain how they could be used to add meaning to the solo performance discussed in Question 4a. A comprehensive list of theatrical conventions from the Drama Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design and the Solo Performance Prescribed Structures for 2004 was supplied. Some students chose to write about more than two theatrical conventions; in these cases, the two better responses were marked. Some students chose to write about a convention not on the list; no marks could be awarded for this approach.

A high-rating response was characterised by:

- an insightful and creative approach that related the image, the characters and the chosen theatrical conventions
- a clear understanding of the chosen theatrical conventions and how they could be used to add meaning to the solo performance
- appropriate choice of theatrical conventions to enhance the solo performance
- a balanced discussion of two theatrical conventions, with pertinent examples of their application used to illustrate the student's knowledge and understanding
- appropriate use of terminology
- an analytical observation of the picture
- evidence of the development of ideas through Questions 4a and 4b.

A low-rating response was characterised by:

- confusion between dramatic elements and theatrical conventions
- a lack of knowledge of the listed theatrical conventions
- poor choice of theatrical convention(s)
- confusion of terminology
- inappropriate application of theatrical convention(s)
- conflict between answers to Question 4a and 4b
- a lack of practical application of the knowledge acquired in Unit 4
- a discussion of theatrical conventions without evidence of their application to this solo performance
- a brief or unfinished answer.